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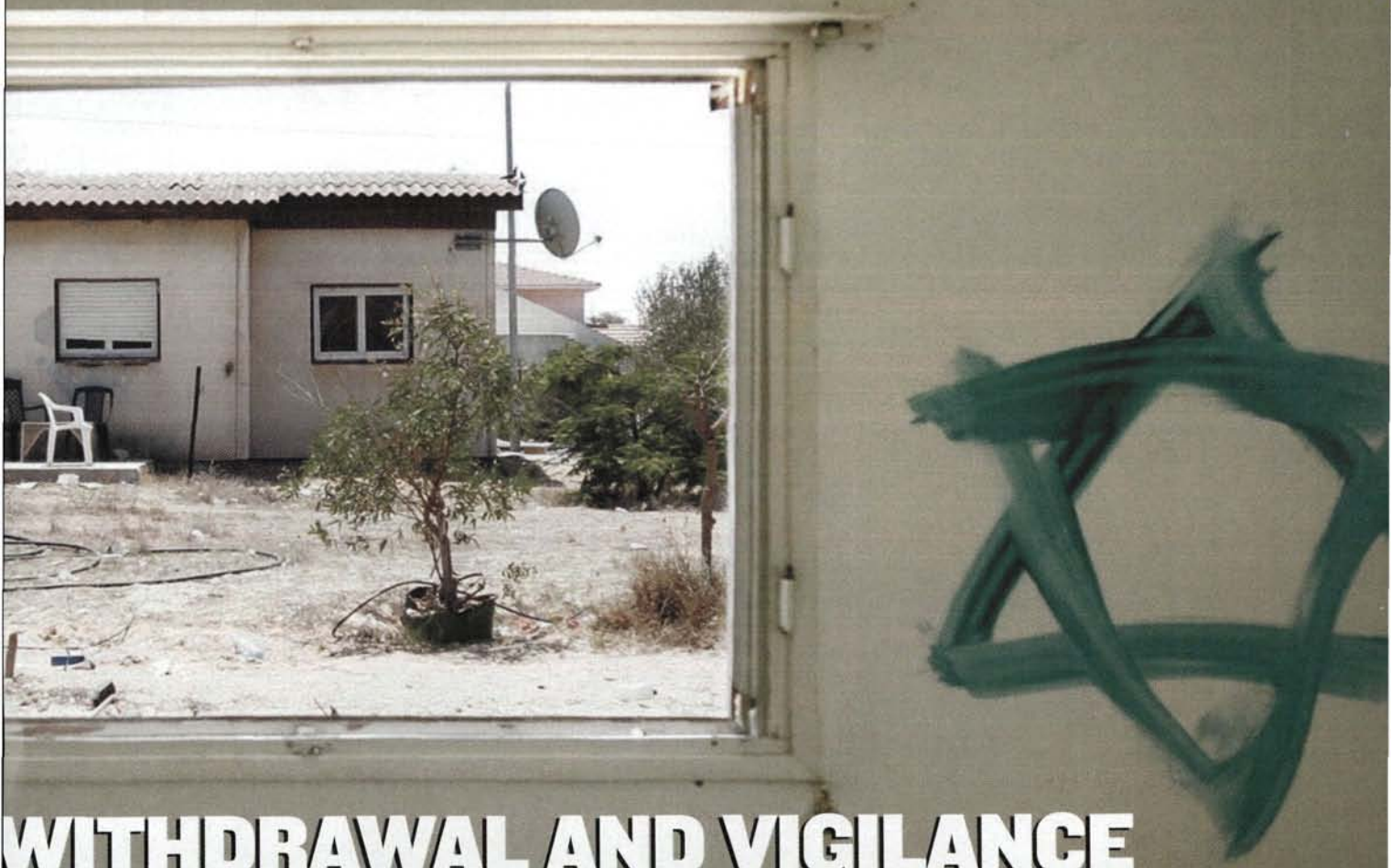

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The Meanings of Gaza

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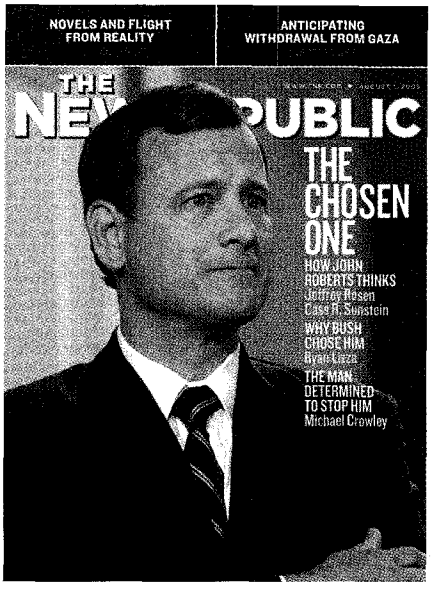
CORRESPONDENCE

ENEMY OF THE GOOD

LAWRENCE KAPLAN SUGGESTS I have abandoned my belief in Iraqi liberalism ("Quiet American II," August 1) because, he argues, I "prefer[ed]" a cleric-backed slate to win the January 2005 Iraqi elections. This is not quite right. In no way do I believe that liberalism is dead in Iraq, although achieving it remains an uphill battle. Our difference is about how to encourage liberalism.

Before the January elections, the Bush administration painted then-interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi as a champion of liberalism. They portrayed him as the great white hope. Embassy officials and National Security Council staff described a reality to the White House that simply did not exist. Living outside the Green Zone, I heard increasingly shrill allegations from a variety of different Iraqis about Allawi's corruption. There was also discord among Iraqi Shia and Kurds regarding his willingness to embrace former Baathists. Even Sunni Arabs I spoke to complained about Allawi's failure to fulfill promises of strong leadership and better security. This was the root of my argument: Allawi could not win, and I counseled against putting all our eggs in one basket. Allawi said the right things, but he had no history of delivering. While the United Iraqi Alliance was backed by Grand Ayatollah Ali Al Sistani and, like the other lists, included some thugs and murderers, it was not homogeneous. Some members are Islamists. Others are quite liberal.

Politics is the art of the possible. Because the path to Iraqi liberalism could not be through the "secular" slate of Allawi, and because too many in the Kurdish slate were regional rather than national in focus, the only hope for liberalism will be through the victory of liberal factions within Sistani's religiously tinged slate. The analogous situation on the American left is the perennial debate about whether progressives should support Ralph Nader or the Democratic Party's candidate. Nader may be the truest expression of progressive beliefs, but, in 2000, a vote for Nader was sometimes a vote



for Bush. Kaplan felt we should do the Iraqi equivalent of voting for Nader. I respectfully disagree. Liberalism will not be achieved through political martyrdom. Not believing in a loser is not the same as supporting Islamism.

MICHAEL RUBIN
Resident Scholar
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Washington, D.C.

FABLES AND MYTHS

I WAS PUZZLED AT THE VEHEMENCE OF Emily Wilson's review of my book *The First Poets: Lives of the Ancient Greek Poets* ("The Plonking Muse," July 4). "Why on earth," she wonders, "would an educated, well-read man … assume that everyone, ancient and modern, will be interested only in facts and not in fictions?" This, on the grounds that I declare myself "a believer" in the legends of Orpheus.

In doing so, I express a paradox that anyone interested in ancient poetry confronts. There are no facts—as amply established by modern classicists—yet (like the ancients themselves) we crave them anyway. When we have a few shards, we imagine a pot; from a few indications, we deduce a story. Ancient biographies, presented as fact, competing with one another as true, are the inventions of ancient critics keen to open Homer with Homer, to discredit Sappho, to claim a poet for local reasons. These narratives are entertaining in themselves and in contrast with one another; they cast light on the evolution of audience and readership, on the changing culture of reception. In the case of Orpheus, the crucial arrival of Eurydice is quite a late addition. In telling the story of the stories, I am not Gradgrindian but Stevensian. I believe in their value as contradictory, amusing, dramatic, and revelatory in their attitudes toward their subjects. In the case of Homer, the greatest challenge for the nonspecialist reader is to contemplate the possibility that "he" never existed at all: the great Anon, for whom the ancients invented elaborate lives.

I have an abiding, unapologetic respect for the writing of Albin Lesky and Maurice Bowra. I find the sneering tone of "Lesky's and Bowra's antique guides" inaccurate and ungrateful. For nonspecialists, Lesky and Bowra remain dependable thresholds. Scholarship has taken great strides since their time, but there is culture and humanity in both writers, which is durable and valuable today, perhaps especially today. Finally, *The First Poets* declares that I am not a classicist but an interloper and explains my motives in writing the book. Contemporary scholarship and theory in the classics (as in other disciplines) erects a palisade between the poets by whose work I am fascinated and the general readers I serve as a publisher, critic, and teacher.

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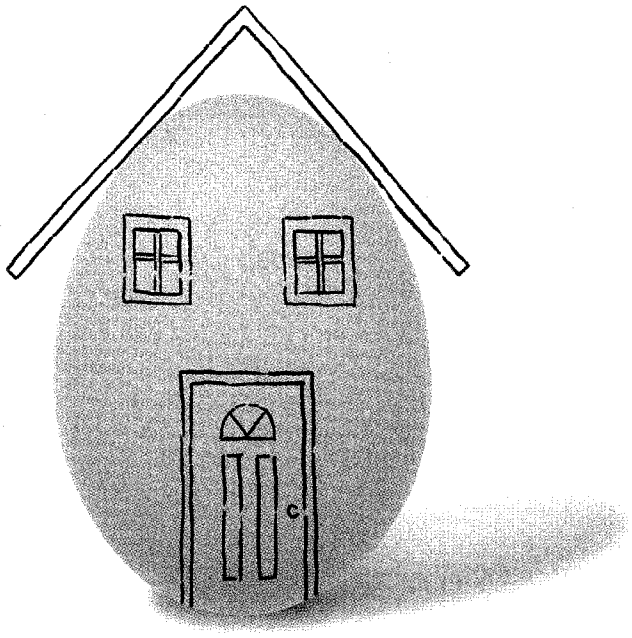

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Science Fiction

TRB
FROM WASHINGTON

In 1993, the journalist Jonathan Rauch published a book called *Kindly Inquisitors*, in which he catalogued contemporary threats to the Enlightenment tradition of seeking truth through logical or empirical discourse. One of Rauch's points was that, while this (classical) liberal system for amassing knowledge appeared to be under attack from both the religious right and the multicultural left, in fact the two groups were making a version of the same argument: Mainstream science didn't accord their beliefs the respect they deserved, whether it was creation science on the one hand or feminist or Afro-centric science on the other.

Rauch's book has held up remarkably well in the twelve years since it was published. This is particularly so in light of the current debate over intelligent design (ID)—the idea, popular on the right, that life is too complex to have resulted from random variation. Even President Bush has suggested, as the creation scientists (and multiculturalists) of the 1980s and 1990s did before him, that both sides of the supposed debate be treated as legitimate in public school curricula.

But there was one thing Rauch didn't anticipate. At the time, he suggested that, even though creationists had adopted the tactics of the academic left—the demand for equal time—they still believed in objective truths. They just didn't think all of these truths were discoverable by science. By contrast, today's IDers have gone further and adopted the epistemology of the left—the idea that ostensibly scientific truths may be relative.

The animating principle of the postmodern left is the notion that truth follows from power and not from its intrinsic rightness. It's a conceit that began in the humanities but eventually spread to hard sciences like physics. "The point is that neither logic nor mathematics escapes the contamination of the social," as postmodern pooh-bah Stanley Aronowitz has put it. What makes this approach so radical is its implication that the way to win intellectually is to win politically.

In making their arguments, the postmodernists rely heavily on the work of historians of science like Thomas Kuhn. It was Kuhn who famously argued that scientific knowledge proceeds as a sequence of "paradigm shifts"—revolutions in the way we understand the world—and that the shifts occur not simply when the evidence in favor of the new paradigm becomes overwhelming, but when the people invested in the old paradigm are in some sense defeated (which may not occur until long after they're proved wrong). Mainstream science has taken from Kuhn the belief that evidence and logic are necessary, if not quite sufficient, conditions for a paradigm shift and that, in the long run, successive shifts bring society closer to objective truth. Where the postmodernists go awry is in their emphasis on Kuhn's relativism.

Unfortunately, these postmodernist ideas have become a staple of the ID movement. As laid out in a strategic memo produced by the Seattle-based Discovery Institute, the leading backer of intelligent design, "Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud portrayed humans not as moral and spiritual beings, but as animals or machines who inhabited a universe ruled by purely impersonal forces." There was nothing particularly objective about this view, according to the IDers. Instead, applying the same reading of Kuhn that the postmodernists embrace, they argue that it was simply the result of a political struggle between insurgents and the establishment. (In fact, the IDers frequently cite Kuhn to this effect.) Probably the clearest example of this comes courtesy of Bruce K. Chapman, the Discovery Institute's president. "All ideas that achieve a sort of uniform acceptance ultimately fall apart, whether it's in the sciences or philosophy or politics, after a few people keep knocking away at it," he recently told *The New York Times*. But that's nuts. Germ theory, relativity, the idea that the earth is round—with apologies to Tom Friedman, the fact that all have withstood the occasional challenge suggests that truth counts for something.

Chapman might protest that he's simply proposing a more accurate alternative to evolution, the same way Darwin proposed a more accurate alternative to creationism. But ID isn't a new theory, just a new attempt to advance an old one, with some new empirical claims thrown in for good measure. As Jerry Coyne has pointed out ("The Faith that Dare Not Speak Its Name," August 22 & 29), scientists can discredit ID using the exact same evidence they used to debunk creationism. Once you realize this, it's no longer possible to interpret Chapman as echoing the belief in a steady progression toward truth.

Like all conservatives, of course, the IDers *claim* to decry relativism and to embrace absolutes. But, for them, the claim is logically incoherent in a way it wasn't when it came from their creationist predecessors. When a proposition is empirically false, as both creationism and ID (to the extent that it makes empirical claims) are, you're free to assert its truth; you just can't call it science. The creationists had no problem with this; they just rejected any science that contradicted the Bible. But the IDers aspire to *scientific* truth. Unfortunately, the only way to claim that something empirically false is scientifically true is to question science's capacity for sorting out truth from falsehood, the same way postmodernists do.

Conservatives were quick to point out the danger of this view in the '80s and '90s. They argued that a science that rejected the idea of truth was vulnerable to the most inane forms of intellectual hucksterism. And they were right. It's not hard to imagine scams like cold fusion or the Scientologist critique of psychiatric drugs gaining ground in a world where science's ability to identify knowledge has been undermined. (Among other monuments to postmodern thought was the idea that $E=mc^2$ might be a "sexed equation" that "privileges the speed of light over other speeds," as Belgian-French theorist Luce Irigaray once asserted.)

Americans don't like thinking of themselves as backward. As a result, the risk from science-rejecting creationists hasn't been particularly acute in recent decades. But most people don't have very strong views on the philosophy of science. If, unlike the postmodern left, the ID movement can enlist mainstream conservatives in questioning science's capacity to produce objective truth, then it's by no means clear the effort won't succeed. In that case, it will end up threatening a whole lot more than just evolution.

NOAM SCHEIBER

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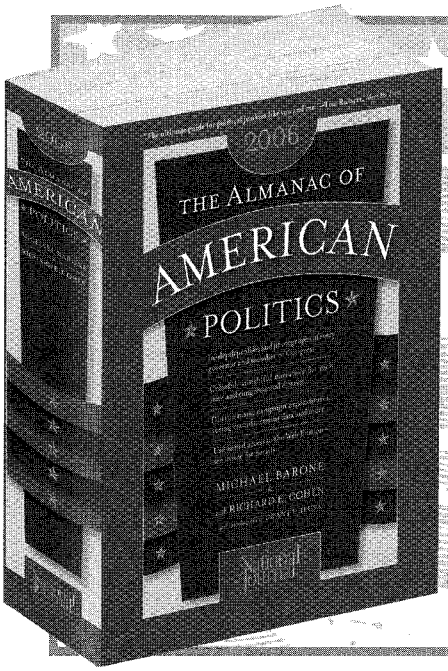

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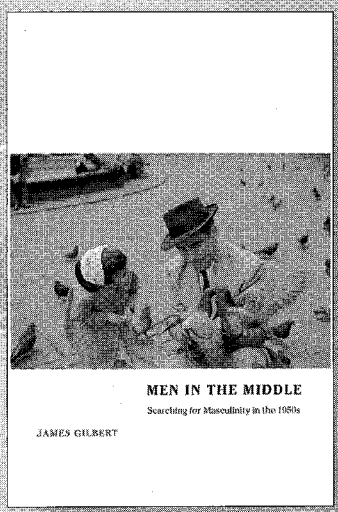

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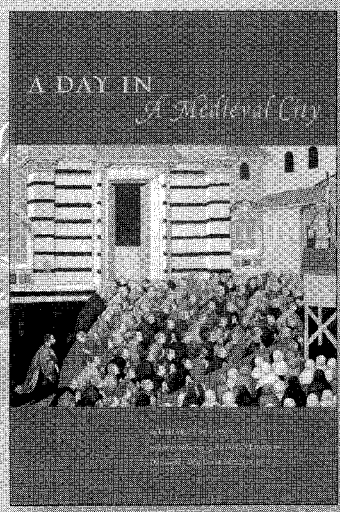

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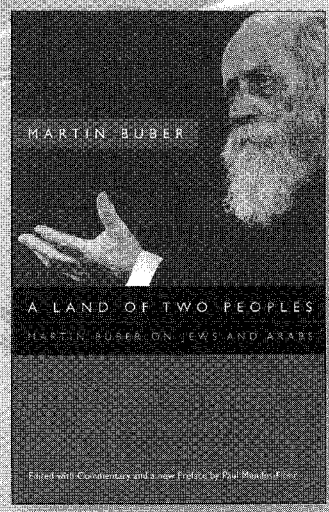

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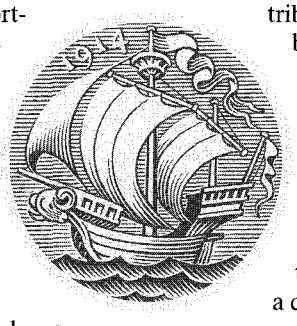
War Debt

WHAT DO WE owe Cindy Sheehan? That is the question of the moment, as Sheehan, the mother of a soldier killed in Iraq and now a fervent critic of President Bush, has emerged as the most potent symbol of the nascent but growing antiwar movement. At its most basic level, the answer is simple: As the survivor of a service member killed in combat, Sheehan and her family are entitled to death benefits of up to $500,000. But, of course, the answer is not nearly so simple, and the debt owed to Sheehan is in fact much greater than any monetary figure.

Sheehan, like any person who has lost a loved one in service to our country, certainly deserves our compassion. She also deserves the opportunity to meet with our commander-in-chief (yes, it would be her second meeting, but a president who has time for a two-hour bike ride with Lance Armstrong during a five-week vacation has time to meet again with the mother of a man he sent to war and, ultimately, death). Most important, now that Sheehan has injected herself into the political debate, she deserves our respectful treatment.

That, alas, has not always been forthcoming. Ever since Sheehan's vigil outside Bush's vacation home in Crawford, Texas, began drawing press coverage, and her demand that Bush withdraw U.S. forces from Iraq began going out over the wires, she has been subjected to the sort of harsh, brass-knuckles treatment that has been unleashed against seemingly anyone—from John McCain to Richard Clarke to John Kerry—who threatens Bush's primacy. Conservative bloggers have posted court documents about Sheehan's pending divorce; the Fox News Channel's Fred Barnes has called her a "crackpot"; and Rush Limbaugh has declared that her "story is nothing more than forged documents—there's nothing about it that's real."

Sheehan, to be sure, has engaged in some heated and at times offensive rhetoric of her own. She has called Bush "the biggest terrorist in the world" and a "filth-spewer and warmonger," and she has claimed that the United States is waging nuclear war in Iraq. But, while such words should not necessarily be excused, they should be understood, at least in part, as a product of her grief—a grief that many of her attackers themselves have not experienced. Indeed, one could argue that the Bush supporter who has formulated the most appropriate response to Sheehan is the president himself—who has simply said that he is sorry for her loss, that he respects her right to voice her opinion, and that he respectfully disagrees with that opinion. Of course, it's much easier for Bush to take the high road when his allies are fighting down in the gutter. Moreover, it's representative of this president's intellectual limitations that he can't deliver that response in person, defending his policies face-to-face.



But, if Bush's supporters can be faulted for their treatment of Sheehan, so, too, can the president's critics. Opponents of the war have unquestioningly embraced Sheehan, declaring that, because of her terrible loss, her views are unimpeachable and her moral authority is absolute. This is identity politics masquerading as foreign policy—a phenomenon that, prior to Sheehan's emergence, played a prominent role in Kerry's presidential campaign and will likely be a feature of the 2006 midterm elections, now that Democrats are recruiting Iraq war veterans to run as candidates. When this happens, the merits of the argument regrettably become subsumed by the merits of the person making them.

This is not only anti-democratic, it is a dangerous and ultimately dead-end road for liberals to travel. After all, Sheehan is not unique in her personal loss. There are more than 1,800 other families who have suffered a similar bereavement. And a number of these families have views about the war that are diametrically opposed to Sheehan's. Now that Sheehan has become the face of the antiwar movement, supporters of the war have trotted out the parents of slain soldiers who share their views. Camp Casey, the antiwar village Sheehan has erected in Crawford in tribute to her dead son, has been met with Fort Qualls, a pro-war encampment in Crawford that was established by Gary Qualls in honor of his son Louis, a Marine who was killed in Falluja last fall. A debate about the war that devolves into a debate between grieving parents is no debate at all.

What all of us—and particularly people like Sheehan and Qualls, who have paid a direct price for this war—are owed is an honest assessment of the situation in Iraq and a strategy for the war that is informed by that assessment. That we still lack both is a tragedy as deserving of our attention as Cindy Sheehan's. ■

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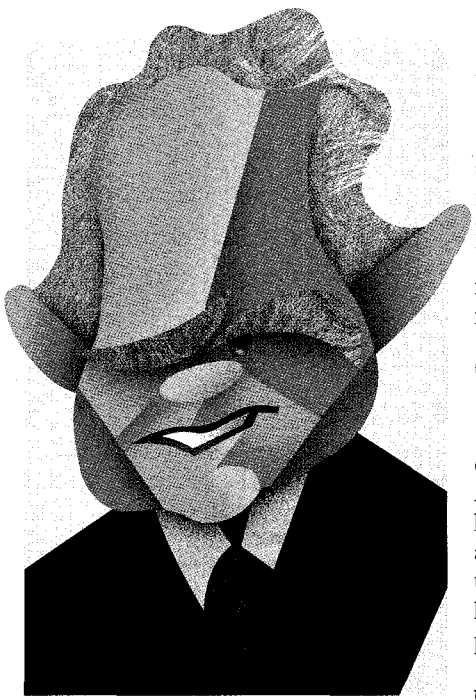
NOTEBOOK

PREACHER PROFFERS AN EASIER WAY . . . OHIO GOV SAYS IT'S JUST PLAY

TAKE HIM OUT

WE HOLD NO QUARTER WITH Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, which is why we were so disturbed by Pat Robertson's call Monday for the United States to "take him out." Channeling Joe McCarthy on his TV program, "The 700 Club," Robertson warned that Chavez risked turning his country into a "launching pad for communist infiltration and Muslim extremism" and that, "if he thinks that we're trying to assassinate him, I think that we really ought to go ahead and do it." Robertson later apologized in a letter on his Christian Broadcasting Network website, but he also reaffirmed the substance of his initial statement. It would have been better to assassinate Saddam Hussein than go to war, he writes, and, "when faced with the threat of a comparable dictator in our own hemisphere, would it not be wiser to wage war against one person rather than finding ourselves down the road locked in another bitter struggle with a whole nation?" He even compares himself to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian executed for supporting an assassination plot against Hitler.

Set aside the hypocrisy of a "man of God" lending his support to state-sponsored hit jobs. Robertson is, like it or not, a major voice of American religiosity. Indeed, the U.S. struggle against violent religious extremists abroad is damaged significantly when our own religious extremists all too casually resort to violent exhortations. Nor does it help that Robertson's invocation of American covert assassins only feeds Chavez's paranoia of, well, American covert assassins, which he then uses to justify taking his country further down the road toward authoritarianism. We don't advocate embracing thugs like Chavez, it's not unreasonable to call for care when dealing with one of our largest oil suppliers. Nuance, however, is clearly lost on Robertson—unless he's using it to extract his foot from his mouth.



Pat Robertson

CORRUPT LINKS

BOB TAFT MAY HAVE TEED OFF ONE too many times. Last week, the Republican governor of Ohio pleaded no contest to charges that he failed to report posh golf outings and other goodies he received from lobbyists and associates. Or, as he called them, "recreational events with friends."

Who are Taft's golf buddies? Well, there's the former CEO of Nationwide Insurance, a company regulated by the state whose employees have donated $33,000 to the governor. And Jack Ruscilli, who heads up a construction company that has built $2 billion worth of schools in Ohio. The attorneys of Schottenstein Zox & Dunn, a Columbus law firm that has earned $369,483 evaluating a state agency, have played a few rounds with the governor. And, of course, there's Tom Noe, who joined Taft on the links in May 2001 and has since been accused of bilking millions from the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation $50 million rare-coin fund.

After a judge found Taft guilty and slapped him with a $4,000 fine, the governor tried to assure reporters that "there is no connection between golf or contributions and state contracts in our administration." That's right. It's really based more on your handicap.

CYBERWAR OF IDEAS

OVER THE PAST YEAR, ISLAMIC TERrorists have developed an "online empire," according to *The Washington Post*. Sophisticated websites stream high-quality training videos, chat rooms and bulletin boards allow communication between terrorist groups, and online magazines are effective tools for propaganda.

Only recently, the State Department has decided to return fire in this cyberwar of ideas. But its solution—a modest series of Web chats—seems a poor match for the sophistication found in the likes of terrorist leader Abu Musab Al Zarqawi's influential Internet magazine *Thurwat Al Sinam* (*The Camel's Hump*).

First of all, in its infinite wisdom, the State Department has chosen to reach out to Arab youth in . . . English. Furthermore, its decision to host the chats during working hours in Washington means that most potential participants in the Arab world—or even in Europe—will have to stay up well past their bedtimes to participate live (though the chats to date, on such diverse topics as foreign aid, human rights, the Supreme Court, and auto emissions, have been so stultifying that one suspects it would be hard to stay awake no matter what the time of day). And that's the real problem with the format: It's "sterile," in the words of one State Department official in Moscow who offered feedback during a chat last week. State says it's working on sprucing up the chats with multimedia content,

DAVID COWLES

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but, given the pioneer status of the United States in the world of computer technology, we wonder what's taken it so long. Where's Al Gore when you need him?

DESIGN FLAW

SOMETIMES IT'S HARD TO KNOW whether Christopher Hitchens is serious. After all, here's a guy who still purports to be a liberal, but nevertheless puts himself into increasingly contorted positions to find ways to defend the Bush administration's latest outrage. This week, in his column for *Slate*, it's Bush's call for equal time in teaching evolution and intelligent design (ID). Like other ID supporters, Bush cloaked his call for ID education in terms of teaching the "debate." Hitchens, however, willfully misconstrues Bush's position. What Bush is promoting, he claims, is the "deceptively fair-minded idea" of studying the history of creationism-versus-evolution. "Why *not* make schoolchildren study the history of the argument?" he writes. "It would show them how to weigh and balance evidence, and it would remind them of the scarcely believable idiocy of the ancestors of 'intelligent design.'" Except, of course, this isn't what Bush—or IDers—want at all. What the ID camp wants instead is to teach ID as a substantive scientific argument. If anything, what Bush is calling for is *anti*-historical, the exact opposite of what Hitchens praises. Hitch is too smart not to see this distinction. It's just that he may be too enamored of Bush to let intelligence get in the way.

CABLE IS HELL

"IF I HAD EVEN A SMALL AMOUNT of the money that the country is spending to fight this war, every detail would be there and it would look amazing."—Steven Bochco, creator of FX's Iraq War drama "Over There," responding to complaints from Iraq War veterans that his show lacks verisimilitude, *The New York Times*, August 24 ■

TNR.commentary

&c.

BY ALL MEANS, IGNORE THE WAR: I can't say whether the war will be a liability or an advantage for the GOP in next fall's election. But I can say that Republican congressional campaign committee Chairman Tom Reynolds's strategy for dealing with the war will be a complete failure. You get a sense of the strategy from Reynolds's comments in the August 18 *New York Times*:

> Representative Thomas M. Reynolds of New York, chairman of the Republican Congressional campaign committee, said he believed that the war would fade as an issue by next year and that even if it did not the elections would, as is typically the case, be decided by local issues.
>
> "I'm not concerned," Mr. Reynolds said. "Fifteen months away is a long time, and I don't see it. It's going to get back to the important issues of what's going on in the district. When it gets down to candidates, it's what's going on in the street that matters."

Reynolds seems to think the path to victory for Republicans is ignoring national security. But, given how unpopular the war is, and given people's concerns about terrorism and how the war may be exacerbating our vulnerability to it, that's a disaster waiting to happen. The only way Republicans can turn this liability to their advantage is to use Iraq as a culture war wedge issue, à la 2004, wherein they accuse Democrats of lacking the steel and resolve to defend the country.

In some respects, Reynolds's plan for 2006 is a mirror image of the Democrats' disastrous plan for the 2002 elections, which involved getting the war "off the table" with a quick vote in order to talk about Social Security and prescription drugs, when in fact all people wanted to talk about was national security. We all saw how successful that was.

—*Noam Scheiber*

NO, MR. KILGORE, I EXPECT YOU TO DIE!: *Daily Kos* is promising that he will unveil a superweapon to destroy the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC). And its threats appear to be growing ever more comically megalomaniacal:

> Two more weeks, folks, before we take them on, head on. No calls for a truce will be brooked. The DLC has used those pauses in the past to bide their time between offensives. Appeals to party unity will fall on deaf ears. ... We need to make the DLC radioactive. And we will. With everyone's help, we really can. Stay tuned.

Isn't this really James Bond villain/Dr. Evil–type stuff? From the insistence that he has a foolproof secret plan, to the macho predictions that the enemy will beg for mercy and be denied, right down to the metaphor ("make the DLC radioactive"—bwahahahahaha!). After this buildup, anything short of a giant laser gun aimed at the DLC offices is going to seem kind of disappointing.

—*Jonathan Chait*

TAKE THIS SCANDAL, PLEASE!: Now that Jack Abramoff has done his first perp walk, Democrats can finally be assured that this scandal is the real deal, and it's probably going to get bigger. I'm told the government's Abramoff task force, composed of investigators from, among others, the Justice and Interior Departments and the IRS have visited Greenberg Traurig, Abramoff's former law firm. This stop is regarded as a sign that they are nearing completion of the investigation. The Feds in D.C. are looking at two more cases against Abramoff—a tax evasion case and a racketeering one.

It's easy to see where this is leading. Abramoff will be forced to rat out bit players in his scandals, especially collaborators at other lobbying firms. These collaborators will then, in turn, be pressured to rat out members of Congress. What's more, John McCain will probably hold another set of hearings this fall, hearings that could nicely coincide with the next round of indictments.

Democrats need to imprint a critical idea in the public's mind: This isn't incidental corruption committed by rogue lobbyists, but a scandal that cuts to the core of the Republican governing strategy. It's about the GOP's obsessive desire to service K Street in return for campaign contributions, patronage, and other largesse. Because this scandal involves Byzantine transactions, it will be hard for Dems to explain to voters. Indictments will surely help make the case. But Democrats also need to begin weaving their narrative of Washington decay now, so that it will become a clear storyline of '06.

Why are the Dems so reluctant to plunge into this issue? Some on the Hill suggest that Democrats are just as implicated as Republicans in this mess. But, while some Democrats are implicated, there's no denying that one party is more implicated. And this is a pretty lame (moral and political) reason for lying low, when such a nice gift has landed in your lap.

—*Franklin Foer*

SENIOR EDITORS NOAM SCHEIBER, JONATHAN CHAIT, AND FRANKLIN FOER ARE BLOGGING &C. TO READ MORE POSTS, GO TO WWW.TNR.COM

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Dry your eyes, keep your heads.

The Fall

BY LEON WIESELTIER

EVEN FACED WITH the idea of Greater Palestine, it is impossible not to rejoice in the defeat of the idea of Greater Israel. It was always a foul idea, morally and strategically. It promoted the immediate ecstasy of the few above the eventual safety of the many; it introduced the toxins of messianism and mysticism into the politics of a great modern democracy; it preferred chosenness to human rights; it subordinated laws to visions, and the Jewish state to the Jewish millennium; it worshiped soil in a primitive, almost un-Jewish way. The settlers of the West Bank and Gaza are not a Jewish vanguard, they are a Jewish sect; and in their insistence that the destiny of their state and their society should be held hostage to the fulfillment of their metaphysical and historical conceptions, they have always displayed a sectarian self-love.

In the settlement of Netzarim earlier this year, the settlers published a book whose title might be translated as *Super-Natural Living: Tales of Life in Gush Katif*, a collection of testimonies about the idyll of Jewish existence in Gaza. It is chilling to read, because of its unreality. "The Arabs say to each other, and to their Jewish neighbors, that until the Jews arrived to settle in this region, there was almost no rain. It was impossible to grow anything in the sands. But since we returned here, the rains have started to fall, and the land generously produces its bounty. ... This is without a doubt the fulfillment of the prophecy [in Ezekiel] about the redemption of Israel: 'But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to my people of Israel.' " There are no mountains in Gaza, but never mind. The settlers in Gaza created a magical world for themselves, an introverted universe of endless miracles. They were indifferent to, or contemptuous of, the decidedly unmagical and unmiraculous effects of their enterprise in the bitter world beyond.

For this reason, when I behold the photographs of the settlers in Gaza uprooted by Israeli soldiers, empathy almost completely deserts me. I seem to have a heart of stone, and I am not entirely embarrassed by it. More precisely, I regard the eviction of the settlers as the appropriate reward for their own hearts of stone. For many other Jews gave their lives and their limbs so that these Jews could grow their holy tomatoes and study their holy texts in this desert. In order to satisfy their individual and collective aspirations, the Israeli civilians who lived in Gaza required the sacrifice of Israeli soldiers in Gaza. In the years of Jewish settlement in Gaza, 230 Israelis were killed there. A substantial number of them were soldiers. Why is the life of a Jew in a uniform worth less than the life of a Jew in a greenhouse? *That* is stone-heartedness. And yet one hears mainly about the sacrifices of the settlers. Surely the same stirring revival of Zionist agronomy could have been accomplished in the equally arid zones a few miles to the north or the east, in a place called Israel.

One hears a great deal, too, about the courage of the settlers, and about this, too, we should be clear: throughout their experiment in revising the meaning of Israeli statehood and denying the possibility of Palestinian statehood, the settlers enjoyed the protection of a fearsomely powerful army, whose energies they diverted from more pressing tasks, especially in times of crisis. They required, and they deserved, the protection of the Israeli army against their wild neighbors, who, unimpeded by their politics and incited by their religion, frequently rained rockets and other kinds of terror upon the intruding enclaves; but the vulnerability of the settlements was not evidence of their validity, or of their bravery. In Zichron Yaakov and Rishon L'Tzion and Tel Hai and Deganya and Hebron and elsewhere in the 1910s and 1920s and 1930s and 1940s, Jewish settlers were brave. But in Gaza and the West Bank in the 1970s and 1980s and 1990s and 2000s? They lived dangerously, to be sure; but living dangerously is not the same thing as living heroically.

These settlers were not pioneers, they were pawns—the eager and fervid pawns of various Israeli governments acting on a grandiose geopolitical scheme whose futility has finally become apparent to a majority of the citizens of Israel. For a few decades the settlers seemed to be winning, and now, at least in Gaza, they have lost. That is all. It is a tragedy for their movement, but it is not a tragedy for their nation. "As Israel prepares to withdraw from Gaza," wrote a prominent rabbi in New York, "it is not only natural but also proper that we experience a keen sense of mourning over our loss." But the disengagement from Gaza is not our loss. If our interest is in the delineation of defensible borders for Israel, it is our gain. The withdrawal is an act of historical wisdom. I will not squander my powers of sorrow over these dangerous and delirious places. In the years in which 230 Israelis were killed in Gaza, moreover, 2,600 Palestinians were killed in Gaza. Many of those deaths are plainly attributable to internecine Palestine violence, and more generally to the virulently rejectionist character of Palestinian nationalism; but Palestinian costs are human costs, too. Empathy is not a tribal faculty, it is a universal faculty, and such universalism is also a teaching of the Jewish tradition. The suffering in Gaza has been everywhere too great.

FOR THE SETTLERS, however, empathy is, as a matter of principle, a feeling only for the tribe. This was the lesson of the slogan that they coined for their resistance to Sharon: "A Jew does not expel a Jew." Whereas a non-Jew does expel a Jew, and did so quite regu-

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larly in the history of the Jews in exile. The word "expulsion" was not used only descriptively here. It would have been just as accurate to call Ariel Sharon's action an eviction or an evacuation. No, the portrayal of the action as an expulsion was a political exploitation of history. It proposed a cluster of historical analogies: that this is a persecution like the old persecutions, that Sharon is like the infamous emperors and kings. On the day of their evacuation the settlers in Kfar Darom unfurled a banner that vowed, KFAR DAROM WILL NOT FALL AGAIN!; the papers explained that this was a reference to the destruction of an earlier Jewish outpost on this site during the Arab Revolt in the 1930s, but the Hebrew phrase referred unmistakably to the old motto about Masada. An "autopogrom," wrote a commentator in *The Washington Post* who obviously knows nothing about pogroms. And the hysterical analogies reached as far as the most obscene one. "Unfortunately, I am no longer surprised when a Jew compares me and other Israeli officials to Nazis," the Israeli minister of construction and housing wrote in *The New York Times*. "It has become part of the rhetoric of those who oppose withdrawal, including the tiny minority who threaten violent resistance."

But then he added, unaware of the sentimental complicity to which he was admitting: "But every member of the government understands the painful symbolism involved in displacing Jews." Is that so? In the case of Gaza, such symbolism is not painful. It is false, and a little sick. It is the expression not of a national sensitivity, but of the ideological manipulation of a national sensitivity. Is it really asking too much to acknowledge the discontinuities of Jewish history along with the continuities? One of those discontinuities is known as Zionism. Losing your head is not the only way to demonstrate *ahavat yisrael*, or love of the Jewish people. After all, the abandonment of the Israeli settlements is the policy of a legitimate and democratically elected government of the Israeli state. (In this respect, it resembles the establishment of the Israeli settlements.) The young settlers who awaited the end swaddled in their phylacteries and their prayer shawls, in their martyrdom kit, were ridiculous. They degraded the instruments of their faith by conflating them with the fortunes of their politics. No martyrdom awaited the hotheads in the woolen skullcaps. They were doomed only to the frustration of their fantasies. The romance of settlement is over. Most Israelis have correctly realized that, all its spiritualizations notwithstanding, Jewish settlement in the territories was an essentially political project whose objective was the extension of Israeli sovereignty over millions of Palestinians, which is an invitation to catastrophe.

THE SETTLERS' SLOGAN was reprehensible for more than its cheapness about history. It was cheap also about morality. It suggested that justice is tribal in nature, that the tribal supersedes the moral. Why, precisely, should a Jew not evict, or use force against, another Jew, if the actions of the latter justify, morally and legally, the actions of the former? The former, again, is not "a Jew," but the legitimate government of a democratic state. Ariel Sharon is a son of his people, but he is also the prime minister of their state. He has the duty to make policies and enforce laws, and the right to use the machinery of the state in the name of his understanding of the public good. That understanding may be challenged at the polls and in the courts, but it can hardly be discredited on the grounds of group loyalty. Jews in Israel cause pain to other Jews in Israel all the time. (The economic policies of Benjamin Netanyahu are a case in point. I do not hear anybody protesting that a Jew does not impoverish a Jew.) It would be much more correct to say that a Jew does not *wrongly* expel a Jew—but such a slogan could not serve the settlers' cause, because the consideration of the rightness or wrongness of such an expulsion introduces a larger ethical framework into the discussion, and thereby releases it from the demagoguery of ethnic solidarity. Anyway, Israel is a multiethnic state. In a multiethnic state, universalism is an obligation of citizenship. Does the proposition that a Jew does not expel a Jew mean that a Jew does expel a non-Jew? If it does, who then is like the infamous emperors and kings?

BUT THE WORST did not happen. The better angels of the Jews carried the day. Twenty-five settlements were ended in six days. There were no casualties. The army was shrewd and compassionate. The settlers went in peace, if not for peace. Now the struggle over the interpretation of the event will begin. Is Gaza a precedent for the West Bank? The Israeli right will insist that it is not, and I expect Sharon to concur, as a necessity of politics. But I do not see how the dismantling of Gush Katif cannot be seen as a precedent, not least because of the breathtaking decency that was demonstrated there. The dread among the Israeli right has a basis in reality.

Still, history is full of precedents for things that do not come to pass. The unilateralism of the withdrawal from Gaza cannot be repeated in the West Bank, where the outcome must be the eschaton known as "final status." Without Palestinian compromise on certain ideological and territorial issues, for which there is no precedent, Gaza will have been not a breakthrough in foreign policy but an adjustment of security policy. In the Netzarim volume, a settler piously (and erroneously) quotes a biblical verse and observes: "If God had wished to destroy Gush Katif, he would not have performed all these miracles for us." Whatever the theological perplexities into which the settlers have now been thrown, they may still cling to one reason for their belief that God is on their side: He sent them, and Israel, Palestinians for their enemies. If the fall of the settlements in the West Bank is premised upon the rise of a Palestinian readiness for significant concessions, the settlers should not lose hope. ■

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Jerusalem Dispatch

Stripped

BY YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI

THE 1967 SIX DAY War endowed Israelis with a sense of invulnerability and completeness. Not only had the war removed an existential threat, but it returned the Jews to their biblical borders. This exhilaration abruptly ceased for most Israelis six years later, with the Yom Kippur War. But, for settlers and their supporters, the dream of biblical borders persisted—until last week's withdrawal from Gaza. For those Israelis, finally, the Six Day War has ended.

The pain of uprooting from the Gaza settlement bloc of Gush Katif wasn't only about the loss of one's private home but of part of the national home. Many of the settlers, after all, had moved there to impart strength to the nation. That mission was confirmed when they turned into favorite targets for terrorists: Over 6,000 mortars fell on their settlements, and whole families were wiped out or crippled in ambushes on the roads. The more they were attacked, the more they held on, offering themselves as an example of Zionist endurance. In one settlement, residents displayed a giant blowup of the Six Day War photograph showing Israeli paratroopers looking up in awe at the Western Wall they had just liberated, to remind Israel of its greatest moment of unity and strength.

The mourning in Gush Katif was for the lost wholeness promised by that war, which religious Zionists called, with biblical reverence, "the six days." In 1967, Israelis glimpsed a happy end to the Jewish story of persecution and wandering. For the first time, Israel seemed secure: In place of the gnawed-looking map that left Israel barely eight miles wide at its narrowest point, there were new borders, diamond-shaped and hard. And the return to the biblical heartland meant the final undoing of the consequences of exile. Religious Zionists, who produced the settlement movement, were inspired not by the bombastic English phrase "Greater Israel," with its expansionist overtones, but by the Hebrew phrase "*Eretz Yisrael Hashlemah*," the completed land of Israel.

For some religious Jews, though, the promise of security and historical reclamation wasn't enough. Overwhelmed by the transition from the Holocaust to the return to Zion and now to united Jerusalem, they saw in the six days a literal recreation of existence. And so, for the first time since the eighteenth century, messianism reemerged among the Jews. Some searched for the formula that would be the tipping point to redemption, the coming of the messiah. In Brooklyn, Chabad Hasidim determined that formula to be restoring as many Jews as possible to observance. In Jerusalem, at the Mercaz Harav Yeshiva, from which the leaders of the settlement movement emerged, they tried to invoke cosmic wholeness by restoring the people of Israel to the land of Israel. Even the Hebrew language, to which religious Jews impart a mystical intentionality, seemed to confirm the dare: In Hebrew, the acronym for Judea and Samaria (the biblical names for the West Bank) and Gaza is *Yesha*, which means redemption.

Israel's abandonment of the Gaza settlements would seem to be a fatal blow to this messianic vision. And, to be sure, the Gaza withdrawal confronts religious Zionism with the greatest crisis in its history. Yet the movement's vitality, and perhaps even its messianic passion, will endure, even as its adherents struggle to define their relationship with the secular state that has rejected their vision.

THE MERCAZ YESHIVA students were inspired by the teachings of their school's founder, Abraham Isaac Hacohen Kook, pre-state Israel's first chief rabbi and one of Judaism's great mystics. Alone among ultra-Orthodox rabbis, Kook celebrated secular Zionism as an instrument for divine fulfillment. He argued that, just as ordinary workmen building the ancient Temple had prepared the ground for the devotions of the high priest, so were secular Zionists, however unconsciously, preparing the way for messianic Zion. For Kookians, Israel was now in the grip of an unstoppable trajectory, from exile and fragmentation to restoration and wholeness.

On the eve of the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av, the fast day commemorating the destruction of the Temple, I went to the Mercaz Harav Yeshiva for services. I expected to find a shattered community. It was, after all, only a day before the start of the Gaza withdrawal. For Mercaz, the dismantling of a part of *Yesha* is, above all, a theological disaster, a wound in the map of wholeness and a rejection by the Jewish state of its role in building messianic Zion.

Yet, in Mercaz, there was no sense of impending disaster. Worshippers sat on the floor or on overturned benches as they do every year on this day, in mourning for the Temple but not for the soon-to-be evacuated settlements of Gaza. The voice of the rabbi who chanted from the Book of Lamentations didn't break, not even over the verse, "Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers, our houses to foreigners." Mercaz simply wasn't convinced the evacuation would happen. It was theologically inconceivable—and therefore politically impossible—for the Jewish state to be exiling Jews from a part of the land of Israel. A last-minute miracle was the most logical possibility. At the entrance to the study hall where Lamentations was read, a notice informing students of when the fast was to begin added, UNLESS THE MESSIAH COMES FIRST.

Many settlers moved to the territories to stake a Jewish claim to the land and to help defend it, not to bring the messiah. And, when settlers campaigned against withdrawing from Gaza, it wasn't just because it threatened the

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Kookian road map to redemption, but because they saw withdrawal as a threat to Israeli deterrence against terrorism. Yet the messianic determinism emanating from Mercaz seeped into settler discourse and allowed even pragmatists to ignore the demographic and moral consequences of annexation. Their campaign against withdrawal ignored the fact that most Israelis had already emotionally withdrawn from Gaza during the first intifada of the late '80s. THE PEOPLE ARE WITH GUSH KATIF, read one sticker popular among settlers. But, according to a poll, two-thirds of Israelis didn't even know exactly where Gush Katif was.

Abandoned by the rest of Israel in their final stand, they could no longer deny their messianic crisis. Settlers about to be evicted sang a hymn of faith in the coming of the messiah, "even if he tarries." Tellingly, the only significant group outside the religious Zionist community to actively oppose withdrawal was the Chabad Hasidic movement, many of whose members believe that their late spiritual leader, or Rebbe, was the messiah. Chabad yellow flags, imprinted with the word MESSIAH, flew over rallies; posters of the Rebbe hung on lampposts in the doomed settlements. The image of the failed messiah, along with the emptying Gaza communities, reinforced the same message: Orthodox Judaism's post-'67 strategies for redemption had failed.

AFTER AV, THE Hebrew month of mourning for the Temple, comes Elul, a month of self-examination preceding the High Holidays. For religious Zionism, Elul has already begun. What is the lesson, religious Zionists are asking, of the defeat of the campaign to stop the withdrawal? Where does the community go after the destruction of *Yesha*'s intactness?

The bitterness is as overwhelming as the ecstasy once was. Religious Zionists speak apocalyptically about the end of Israeli democracy: Ariel Sharon is the head of a "mafia family," the Knesset is hopelessly corrupt, the courts are biased, the liberal elites are subverters. Withdrawal from Gaza, most religious Zionists believe, happened not because of the untenability of maintaining 8,000 settlers in a war zone surrounded by a million Palestinians, but because secular Israel has lost its Zionist soul. The right-wing newspaper *Makor Rishon* reproduced a poster that depicted Israeli soldiers as Jewish slaves carrying the Temple's menorah on their shoulders, the image carved into Rome's Arch of Titus that symbolizes Jewish destruction. For many religious Zionists, that is the post-Gaza conclusion: We are now the builders, secularists the destroyers.

Yet a small but prominent group of religious Zionists insists their community needs humility. How is it, they ask, that, in our obsession with the land of Israel, we ended up losing the people of Israel? "Isolation, combined with a deep internal sense of being in the right without asking for or needing external confirmation, caused a deep blindness in many of us," wrote veteran religious journalist Bambi Sheleg in the newspaper *Maariv*. Religious Zionists, she concluded, must disengage from messianic rabbis who promised that God would prevent the withdrawal and reengage with secularists—not as preachers but as partners.

That was precisely the attitude of religious soldiers who participated in the withdrawal. Just before the evacuation began, I met with a group of religious and secular participants in a squad commanders' course, the first step toward officer training. For the last year, they had been serving in the West Bank, arresting terrorists, trying to undo the consequences of the left's empowerment of Yasir Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization. Now they were about to participate in the evacuation of Gaza settlements, to undo the failed policy of the right.

If you closed your eyes and listened to them speak, you wouldn't have been able to tell religious and secular apart. None of them wanted to participate in the evacuation. "When I served in the West Bank, I was shot at and had a grenade thrown at me, and my jeep hit three roadside bombs," said their officer, Kfir, who lives in a West Bank town near Jerusalem. "But I would much rather be back there and doing what I was trained for than this."

Yet they all agreed that injecting politics into the army would destroy it—and that, by refusing to refuse, they were protecting Israel from self-destruction. "I don't feel I have anything to be ashamed of," said one Orthodox soldier who lost several friends in a terrorist attack in Gaza.

Religious soldiers in particular—many of them settlers—faced a campaign of emotional blackmail. One leading rabbi warned that anyone evacuating a Jew would be lost in "this world and the next." Protesters taunted soldiers as "robots" without conscience—a lie dispelled by the emotional response of so many troops. One protester wearing phylacteries approached a line of soldiers and proceeded to weep on each one's shoulder; as the soldiers hugged back, he demanded, "Tell them you can't do this." Yet, despite predictions of widespread refusal, only a handful of religious soldiers disobeyed orders. And, despite predictions of settler violence, relatively few physically resisted. For most, striking a soldier was seen as a self-inflicted blow. And so soldiers and settlers mourned together. Even as it was dismantling *Yesha*, the army was protecting Israel's wholeness.

IN NETZARIM, FOR years the most besieged Gaza settlement, accessible only by armored convoys, residents asked that the army unit that had guarded them be entrusted with their evacuation. In their final Sabbath together, the unit's commander told residents that he had never met finer people. On the day of evacuation, soldiers and residents prayed and wept together. A woman who lost five family members in terrorist attacks told the officer who came to evacuate her, "During this whole period, we trusted you to do everything you could to protect us, and this is the time to say thank you, but also to ask you: 'Why?'" Then settlers removed the large menorah over their synagogue, carried it on their shoulders, and headed to the Western Wall to pray for redemption. ■

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Gaza Dispatch

Polis

BY MARTIN PERETZ

ISRAEL MAY BE the last polis on earth. Not that its parliamentary debates or party conventions are exactly Athenian. But it is a small country in which almost everyone is alert to the high stakes of its politics, and many are historically knowledgeable and intellectually sophisticated about them. Politics here is, after all, a matter of life and death. Walking around the Gaza settlements last week, I was also struck by the consistent intimacy of the population, even across bitter ideological lines. Even across police lines, talk was the great medium of the conflict that split friends, families, co-workers. Words, not blows; and, in most cases, the arguments between soldiers and settlers ended with a hug, revealing the deeper truth that the Jewish polis may be divided between messianism and realism but is very much one. The civil war that had been widely feared turned out to be a lot of civil and very little war.

I was accompanied in Gaza by my friend Moshe Halbertal, a scholar at the Hebrew University and one of Israel's most distinguished public intellectuals. He encountered students and former students, colleagues and former colleagues, also on both sides of the ideological divide. The physical and philosophical lines in this confrontation were remarkably porous. Some of the songs the resisters sang—and some of the prayers they chanted—also came naturally to the lips of those who had come to uproot them from their homes. This was hardly a meeting of real enemies, although harsh words were said and harsher words shouted. There were more than a few tragicomic scenes, such as impertinent young punks shouting at real combat heroes that they were cowards; but, mostly, it was an encounter between articulate young people and the determined but joyless authorities.

MUCH OF THE high brass of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) was present throughout the entire maneuver and certainly during the three days I spent in Gaza, including the two commanders of this sensitive operation, Dan Harel—who will soon be military attaché in Washington—and Gershon HaCohen, a very independent intellectual, indeed. Both of them—and all of their other comrades, generals and colonels—walked through the hostile crowds without weapons and without bodyguards, a fact that no journalist seems to have noticed. I marveled at this evidence of a resiliently open and unafraid society in a moment of terrible stress. (The ones who needed the bodyguards were the preening politicians, who had come to be seen and not, as they claimed, to see.)

Halbertal was immediately engaged by his interlocutors over matters of democratic theory and Jewish ethics. Hadn't the government of Israel put the residents in Gaza? How could it simply pull them out, uprooting their lives and destroying their work? The citizenry's right to resist, the requirement of a plebiscite in historically decisive matters, the correctness of a unilateral withdrawal, the sacredness of tilled land: These became the topics of ad hoc disputations and tutorials, along with appeals to the men and women of the IDF and the police to refuse their orders. This last issue had already been settled in the weeks and months before. The Greater Israel movement had launched an intense campaign to get soldiers not to participate in the removal of settlers and settlements, but I'm happy to report that, among Israel's young, there is not a big "I'm Not Marching Anymore" culture. Less than a handful refused.

These issues were on almost everyone's tongue during the days of my Gaza stay. Suddenly, almost everyone—the settlers, their outside supporters, the young and old, policemen and women, soldiers, officers, and, yes, generals—was a political philosopher of one sort or another. Everywhere, there were deeply felt opinions and intensely argued ideas. In its fervor of popular argument, this polis was more Jewish in tone than Greek. HaCohen had gone into a yeshiva whose rabbi had reneged on a deal about when he and his acolytes would vacate the school. The students were already in a cosmic trance of liturgy and dance, awaiting an act of God or, even less probably, some stay of the verdict the government had rendered about settlement evacuation. When HaCohen, who was known not to be a particular enthusiast of this unreciprocated disengagement over which he presided so masterfully, came out, he said to me, "I know why I am, in the end, a Litvak." He was referring to the old stereotype of the Lithuanian Jew who lives only for reason and rules and despises enthusiasm and its undermining of personal and social discipline.

One member of the Knesset I met there, neither preening nor shadowed by bodyguards, was Yuli Tamir, a protégé of Isaiah Berlin, author of a fine book on liberal nationalism, professor of political philosophy at Tel Aviv University, minister of immigration and absorption in Ehud Barak's government, and among the declining numbers of the serious Israeli left. She has been reduced (I don't mean this disdainfully) by the behavior of the Palestinians since 2000 to being a de facto supporter of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. But she is a woman of parts. We encountered her outside a house where a young man, his first name being her second, a student of architecture at the prestigious Bezalel school in Jerusalem, was pleading to explain his family's circumstances. Hailing from the swath of Arab North Africa, Tamir's parents had settled in Ofakim, a dreary development town plucked down in the Negev

Martin Peretz has written several Web-only dispatches from Israel covering the disengagement from Gaza. To read them, visit www.tnr.com/gaza.

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desert, an intrinsic part of Israel, though some "moderate" Palestinian officials have recently laid claim to it. (I note this just in case you want an inkling of the political psychodrama of ever more preposterous demands from the Palestinian camp that we are about to witness.)

The family had moved to Neve Dekalim, the Gaza community whose destruction we were witnessing, some 20 years ago. Encouraged by the government, they had planted themselves in Gaza to raise their quality of living. Their house was handsome, with textured white plaster studded with beautiful stone and a red tile roof. Tamir's family worked hard in its greenhouse and had helped its neighbors with theirs. This was private property, but with a communal tinge. (A group of American Jews, mostly good Zionists, have themselves put up $14 million to buy these greenhouses and hand them over to the Palestinians. The Palestinian Authority had rejected a proposal that the U.S. government buy them from the Israelis and transfer them to the Palestinians. Mahmoud Abbas refused to be a party to a transaction in which official U.S. aid would make the greenhouse purchase from the Israelis, even though the greenhouses would eventually go to the Palestinians. Will the greenhouses be functional in two years? I bet not.)

Back to Yuli, and to Tamir. He took us around the house that his father built and around to the garden where his father had planted grapevines two decades ago and where he had uprooted them in the last days to replant them in the next place the family would live. The government's planning for the resettlement of these families and communities within Israel has been sloppy, inchoate, indifferent. They will be living in caravans and in shabby hotels for only God knows how long. I think that Yuli, who had some responsibility for the immigration of Jews from Ethiopia, sensed this young man's agony. And we had to respect the agony. It has a basis in reality. The settlement of Gaza may have been a momentous strategic, political, and even moral mistake, but it did not have to end so shabbily, with so much disdain for the people, some admittedly very difficult and with God on their side, whom the government of Israel had put out in scorching sands. So Yuli and Moshe and I wept a little along with Tamir, whose tears will not dry as quickly as ours. Still, do not doubt the solidarity of this people: The members of a formerly communist and still left-wing kibbutz have invited the evicted members of Homesh, a small right-wing settlement in Samaria, to join them, and at least the nonreligious ones will go. Other kibbutzim sent their members to help the Gaza settlers with the pullout.

And what of the politics in the days and months ahead? Condoleezza Rice is impatient. Even before the evacuation has been completed—it is not just the people who have to be removed, but all the houses torn down (at the insistence of the Palestinians!) and the entire military infrastructure disassembled—she hardly lets a day go by without insisting that Israel give more, including weapons that she cannot assure won't be used against its soldiers and citizens. If she doesn't give Sharon a breather, the secretary of state will soon have Bibi Netanyahu to deal with.

Israel has long ago accepted the proposition of a Palestinian state, and Sharon bonded with President Bush over that agreement. Perhaps this agreement was facilitated by the fact that the boundaries of the state were left a trifle ambiguous. But Bush clearly understood that the big new towns cleaving for 35 years to the precarious 1949 cease-fire lines (and dropping the fragility of those lines a notch or two) were not to be dismantled. The same was understood about the post-'67 Jewish neighborhoods and towns around Jerusalem. More than half a century of the Palestinians refusing to consider a real give-and-take with Israel entails some costs to them. (Bush never quite addressed Sharon's intentions about the Jordan Valley settlements, which set up a barrier to invading Arab armies. These intentions have deep roots in Israeli defense strategy, having been detailed in the Alon Plan 38 years ago.) Nor is this a case of the Israelis taking and taking without recompense: The defense establishment has developed designs for territorial swaps and other reciprocal exchanges that would leave a Palestinian state and its Arab neighbors in far more advantageous positions than they would be if they simply made the happenstance truce lines permanent. And, here, let us raise a no-no. The Gaza dispossession of Israelis has put into the air the idea of "transfer"—not certainly of Israeli Arabs without their towns and villages but Israeli Arabs *with* their towns and villages—to Palestine; not the forced movement of people, but the demographically expedient and diplomatically validated redrawing of the map. This is appropriate only for those municipalities that would, in fact, abut neighboring Palestine. It is true: Some of these Israeli Arabs would want to remain in Israel. But the Gaza Israelis wanted to remain in Gaza. The Israeli Arabs could take their ample Israeli social benefits with them to Palestine, along with their houses and their fig trees and their true loyalties. The other Israeli Arabs would remain resident Israeli citizens as you cannot for a moment imagine Jews being allowed to remain citizens resident in Palestine.

The wrenching experience of the dissolution of Jewish Gaza should be a caution to those Israelis who anticipate a similar and overall fate for the settlements in the West Bank. This will not be repeated; the Israeli body politic simply will not permit it. The fact is that the Israeli settlements of Gaza were different: They were Israel's stepchildren. It was almost as if they were in a foreign land. Virtually no one wanted to serve there to protect 8,500 farmers; but they served. There are some dozens of similar tiny settlements, again with relatively few settlers in them, spread thinly throughout the West Bank and surrounded by or abutting old Arab villages and towns. Many Israelis feel strongly that these settlements are also not an intrinsic part of Israel. They are not contiguous with Israel. They do not command necessary defensive positions. These Jewish enclaves, their ill-wishers believe, are an indulgence to their inhabitants.

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Some of these will also be vacated, with all the pain and sorrow this entails to the people who live in them. "Not everything will remain," said Sharon, and he was echoed—and actually preceded—by his most trusted minister, Ehud Olmert. Altogether, these may constitute something approaching 25 percent of the Israelis in the West Bank proper. There are several towns with quite sizeable populations deep in the West Bank. (Remember: In any of these characterizations a word like "deep" may mean as little as five miles.) They pose a larger problem than the obstinate and isolated little pockets that the Israeli army and police are extricating from Samaria in these very days. These real communities cannot simply be picked up and moved. As difficult a problem as they may pose, they are living organisms with three generations of inhabitants having their souls and bodies entwined with their immediate environment. You cannot simply expel 10,000 individuals here and 10,000 there and 10,000 elsewhere and say this is being done in the interest of making peace.

The remainder of the Israeli settlements and settlers are not at all stepchildren. These constitute what Sharon calls the settlement blocs. The contours of the fence include these, and the fence expresses the logic of the two-state solution. Nothing else does. (It is also the inevitable corollary of the Palestinians having turned down the unreasonably generous proposals made to them by Bill Clinton and Ehud Barak at Camp David and Taba in 2000.) Psychologically and geographically, these small cities and towns are as much Israel as Beersheba and Tiberias. You do not cross checkpoints to get to them. They are suburbs of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, in some cases adjoining suburbs. They are vibrant, pulsating, and growing by natural birth rate and internal migration. (They are not inhabited by people whom a typical NEW REPUBLIC reader might consider weirdos.) The fact is that these will not be given up to a Palestine, real or imagined. And they do not constitute much territory. They are not up for grabs. Any negotiating team with goodwill and good sense could find ways to compensate the Palestinians with the kind of hardscrabble land the Israelis encountered when they first came there three and four decades ago (with the support of Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, incidentally, who also saw them as no obstacle to peace if the Palestinians really wanted peace). The Palestinians claim to adore this land, but one wonders why they never did anything more with it.

In any case, the real question is whether the Palestinians are willing to contemplate compromise. Not since American and European innocents swallowed the line that Josef Stalin really didn't want all of Eastern Europe has there been such widespread gullibility about a political movement's intentions. It's not as if the Palestinian revolution goes to any particular lengths to disguise its objectives. Ah, but, you may say, there are two wings to the Palestinian crusade, a moderate one and an extremist one. The so-called moderate one is led by Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the Palestinian Authority (PA), whose party includes Fatah and its offshoot, the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, which have been at least as involved in ongoing terrorism as those who wave the green flag of Hamas. He has not mobilized whatever force he has to put an end to terrorism, in Gaza or in the West Bank. No terrorist has been arrested, tried, or sent to prison. The truth may be that Abbas and the Palestinian Authority do not have the capacity to control their compatriots who specialize in murder. He may have some months to prove this wrong. In the meantime, his prime minister, Ahmed Qurei, a loyal acolyte of Yasir Arafat, has been consorting with Muslim militants, and Abbas himself will be forced to compete for their loyalties.

CLOSE OBSERVERS OF the Palestinians will tell you to put your money on Hamas in the elections scheduled for January 25. And Hamas has been making its point of view abundantly clear. Do you recall the name Khaled Mashaal, the Hamas official whom an Israeli agent tried to kill in Amman in January 1997, to the outrage of nearly everyone? Imagine the Israelis killing a terrorist chieftain on the street—just imagine. Well, of course, Mashaal has been heard from again and again since: He is now the effective head of Hamas. Ted Koppel said on "Nightline" earlier this year that he imagined Mashaal coming to tea at the White House. (I doubt it would be Bush's White House.) Mashaal told reporters in Beirut and major Arab TV stations, according to the Arab journalist Khaled Abu Toameh, that the Israeli withdrawals marked the beginning of the end of the Zionist dream in Palestine. One of Mashaal's lieutenants, Mahmoud Zahar, impressed upon the pan-Arab daily *Arshaq Al Awsat* that "neither the liberation of the Gaza Strip nor the liberation of the West Bank or even Jerusalem will suffice us. Hamas will pursue the armed struggle until the liberation of all our lands. We don't recognize the state of Israel or its right to hold on to one inch of Palestine. Palestine is an Islamic land belonging to all the Muslims." After a meeting with Qurei, Hamas and Islamic Jihad leaders informed reporters that they were assured that "there would be no attempt" by the PA "to collect weapons from the resistance groups." No PA officials denied this. Well, Prime Minister Sharon, can't you find some more generous common ground with these folks? Secretary Rice, have you heard about this in your morning briefings?

In *The Jerusalem Post* last Thursday, the political commentator Saul Singer astutely observed that the Greater Israel movement may have been broken by—of all people—Ariel Sharon, but what almost nobody has noticed is that Greater Palestine is still alive. Its irredentist and jihadist idea suffuses each and every Palestinian crowd. "Palestinians," Singer wrote, "including Abbas, do not even have to call their goal 'Greater Palestine' because to them that is what the word 'Palestine' means. The Palestine of Palestinian maps, poetry, dreams, and legal claims includes all of Israel." There is no reason for great optimism. Gaza will be a relief to Israel. But partial relief: It does not change the stakes or even the odds. ■

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California fells another governor.

Failed State

BY JOHN B. JUDIS

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

ON THE DAIS, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger—his jaw jutting, his chest thrust forward, his unlined bronze face frozen in a smile—is flanked by four small black schoolchildren, one of whom gazes up at him in rapt wonderment. Behind him stands Latina Democratic State Senator Martha Escutia, and in front of him are crates and baskets of oranges, avocados, and grapes. Schwarzenegger has called a press conference to announce his support for Escutia's Healthy Schools Now Act, which would encourage schoolchildren to forgo junk food. But the event, held here on July 25, was about more than just cute kids and healthy snacks. Over the past eight months, Schwarzenegger has had rancorous conflicts with nurses, firefighters, police, and teachers, while voters were treated to revelations of his personal excesses and ethical lapses—most recently, *The Sacramento Bee*'s report that the California governor was under contract to body-building magazines that make money from advertising notoriously unhealthy dietary supplements. This, then, was the first of many summer events intended to revive Schwarzenegger's standing among the state's disillusioned electorate.

The presence of a Democrat on the platform was meant to recall that, when Schwarzenegger ran for office, he did so as a bipartisan centrist who enjoyed wide support among Democrats and independents. The presence of Escutia in particular was supposed to comfort Latino voters who were offended when Schwarzenegger endorsed the Minutemen, vigilantes who have tried to prevent Mexicans from illegally entering the United States. Schwarzenegger's endorsement of Escutia's bill was meant to show that there was at least one business group, the California-Nevada Soft Drink Association, that the governor was willing to offend. Even the oranges, avocados, and grapes had a political purpose: to make voters forget that, a year earlier, Schwarzenegger had vetoed a bill designed to keep the dangerous dietary supplements advertised in body-building magazines out of high school locker rooms.

But, like Schwarzenegger's subsequent efforts to repair his image this summer, this one, too, fell flat. At the press conference, reporters largely ignored the baskets of fruits and vegetables and focused instead on the highly unpopular special election that Schwarzenegger has called this November in order to pass initiatives crafted by Republican operatives and California business groups—initiatives that would give the governor new authority to cut spending, delay public school teachers' tenure, and force a mid-decade redistricting of the state legislature. "I will work very hard to come up with a bipartisan solution," Schwarzenegger pledged, but he refused to say whether he would cancel the special election. Escutia, asked to comment, said, "A lot of us are willing to work with him, but I frankly don't think the special election is the way to go. If I were his adviser, I would say, 'Cancel the election.' "

During these last months, Schwarzenegger has seen his popularity in the state plummet—from 65 percent approval in the September 2004 Field Poll to only 37 percent in June. Of particular note, he lost ground among political independents—the fastest-growing part of the California electorate. Schwarzenegger could still win back these voters' trust, but his days as a political matinee idol are clearly over, as is any talk of modifying the Constitution to allow the Austrian-born actor to run for president. His main concern now has to be winning reelection in 2006, which, according to the Field Poll, seems in doubt even against the colorless Democratic front-runner, State Treasurer Phil Angelides.

It's easy to see Schwarzenegger's fall simply as the result of his political inexperience, except for one important fact: Schwarzenegger's pattern of failure is nearly identical to that of his more battle-tested predecessors, Republican Pete Wilson and Democrat Gray Davis. Like Schwarzenegger, both Wilson and Davis ran as centrists: Wilson was pro-choice; Davis avidly courted business. Based on their initial popularity, both men came to harbor presidential ambitions. But, like Schwarzenegger, they fell from grace. Wilson's approval rating had fallen to 40 percent on the eve of the 1994 gubernatorial election. He won reelection largely because he ran a successful negative campaign against a gaffe-prone opponent. Wilson's approval rating remained below 50 percent for his second term. Davis's approval was only 39 percent on the eve of his reelection against an even weaker opponent, and he, of course, was recalled by voters in October 2003.

As these similarities suggest, Schwarzenegger's difficulties as governor have more to do with California than with his own ineptitude. Over the last 30 years, the Golden State has developed economic and political fault lines that have made it difficult for any governor to succeed. These divisions separate business and labor, and they limit options for the legislature and for the governor. They undermine the ability

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of legislators and governors to act in California's long-term interest. And, after an initial electoral success, they make genuine—rather than simply cosmetic—centrism difficult, if not impossible. Schwarzenegger could have delayed his own fall, or made it less precipitous. But, given the state of California politics, a fall was almost inevitable.

CALIFORNIA WAS, AND perhaps still is, the great success story of the post–World War II United States. "We *are* the national culture, at its most energetic end," Californian Wallace Stegner declared in 1959. Already a leader in agriculture, California became the center of the nation's aerospace, electronics, and entertainment industries and the principal gateway to the Asian boom. It enjoyed abundant natural resources, a moderate climate, and a steady stream of immigrants, mostly from the Midwest. But California also benefited from three able governors, Republicans Earl Warren and Goodwin Knight and Democrat Edmund G. "Pat" Brown. Each was a centrist—Warren would get the Democratic as well as the Republican nomination—who, with the support of the state's business and labor leadership, built highways, hospitals, and irrigation systems and funded what came to be seen as the nation's outstanding educational system, based upon a master plan that gave each California high school graduate the chance to attend college.

In the mid-'60s, with the rise of the student and civil rights movements—and the outbreak of riots in Los Angeles and San Francisco—California politics became polarized. In 1966, conservative Republican Ronald Reagan defeated Brown, largely on the strength of his opposition to student protestors. But, as governor, Reagan's ideological proclivities were kept in check by California's moderate political establishment and by the state legislature.

The state's political establishment, which influenced—but was not part of—government, consisted broadly of the leaders of the state's major banks, industries, labor unions, academic institutions, and newspapers, but it was dominated by well-known businessmen like William Hewlett and David Packard of Hewlett-Packard, and prominent families like the Chandlers (who owned the *Los Angeles Times*). Most of these individuals were moderate Republicans who worked amicably with Brown as well as Warren and Knight. When Reagan veered right, they steered him back to center—pressuring him, for instance, to increase rather than reduce spending on higher education. Similarly, the state legislature, dominated by moderate Democrats and Republicans, forced Reagan to forgo regressive tax cuts and punitive welfare reforms.

But, in the late '70s, during the governorship of Pat Brown's son, Jerry, these foundations of California's political centrism began to erode, and, by the mid-'90s, they had disintegrated, making effective governance nearly impossible. California was partly victimized by the sharp national divisions that emerged after conservative Republicans took over Congress in 1994, but the state contributed to its own troubles. The seminal event, as former *Sacramento Bee* editorial page editor Peter Schrag recounts in his classic work, *Paradise Lost*, was the passage of Proposition 13.

PROPOSITION 13 WAS a product of California's success. In the late '70s, the national economy was floundering, but California was still booming. Indeed, the state enjoyed a large budget surplus. But part of that surplus came from a dramatic rise in property tax rates, which was the result of earlier legislation that had changed assessment practices. Average home values had risen from $34,000 in 1974 to $85,000 in 1978, and California's property tax bills were 50 percent higher than the national average. Jerry Brown, preoccupied with national ambitions, failed to anticipate the tax revolt. Taking advantage of California's liberal initiative provision, conservative Republicans Howard Jarvis and Paul Gann put Proposition 13 on the ballot in 1978.

Proposition 13 drastically scaled back property taxes by revaluing residential and commercial property at their 1975 values, allowing assessments to rise from that point a maximum of 2 percent a year and to be taxed at a maximum of 1 percent. Brown, backed by the state's political establishment, including the major business organizations and unions, fought it, but to no avail. Voters, angered by their tax bills, adopted it by almost two to one. That immediately produced a 53 percent—or $6.1 billion—reduction in property taxes, primarily from taxes on commercial property. The drain in revenue put sharp downward pressure on state spending for public services. The loss could have been made up through other tax increases, but Proposition 13 included a provision requiring a prohibitive two-thirds vote to adopt state and local tax increases. And, even if revenue could have been increased, the amount governors and the legislature could spend was limited by another Gann-sponsored initiative, Proposition 4, adopted the following year.

As a result of the initiatives, California's public services deteriorated, with the most important and visible casualty being the state's educational system. In 1969–1970, California's per-pupil expenditure was $400 above the national average; by 1999–2000, with the impact of Proposition 13, it was $600 below. All aspects of school spending suffered—from school libraries to special education. Astonishingly, California, the home of Silicon Valley, ranked last among states for student access to the Internet in 2001. On the National Assessment of Educational Progress tests, California students scored lowest from 1990 to 2003 of any states except Louisiana and Mississippi.

As schools, roads, bridges, and hospitals suffered under Proposition 13, Californians clamored for increased spending, but a solid bloc of voters—comprising perhaps as much as half the electorate—remained reluctant to finance it, whether through modifying Proposition 13 or raising other taxes. That created an intolerable contradiction that manifested itself in protracted battles within the legislature and between governors and state representatives. At the in-

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creasingly extreme ends of the political spectrum, liberal Democrats demanded spending and tax increases (through modifying Proposition 13), while hard-line conservatives—now dubbed "Jarvis Republicans"—favored cutting spending *and* taxes. In the first term of Republican Governor George Deukmejian, who succeeded Jerry Brown in 1983, these fights were mitigated by a boom in the California economy created by President Reagan's military spending. But, when the economy faltered during Deukmejian's second term, the battle began again in earnest.

There were, however, still vestiges of a legislative and political establishment that could bridge the chasm between the left and right. In 1989, an alliance of business and labor successfully backed an initiative increasing the gasoline tax to fund the state's deteriorating highway system. The next year, the same alliance backed Proposition 111, which weakened Gann's limits on state spending. The alliance persisted through the first year of Deukmejian's successor, Pete Wilson, urging him to raise income tax rates on the wealthiest Californians in order to defray a $6 billion deficit that Wilson had inherited. Pressed by Kirk West, the president of the Chamber of Commerce, Wilson finally agreed, although the increase was limited to five years. These efforts showed that veteran legislators and members of the state's political establishment could still address the state's fiscal crisis. The center continued to hold, but not for long.

DURING THE '90S, the two pillars of California's centrism—the legislative leadership and the establishment—finally collapsed. As services declined, and as the legislature and governor were unable to agree on budgets, California voters punished the politicians by adopting Proposition 140, which limited assembly members to six years and state senators to eight years, and which drastically reduced the legislature's staff. That measure, promoted by Republican conservatives, made it impossible for politicians to establish their own power base and expertise in Sacramento. Wrote Schrag, "The legislature has in effect become like a Greyhound bus station, where some people have just arrived and where others are waiting to leave, and where few have any particular interest in, or loyalty, to the place through which they must pass."

Proposition 140 also made legislators more dependent on lobbies for money and legislative analysis—Republicans on business and Democrats on labor—at the same time as the national parties were also becoming more polarized between conservatives and liberals. The moderate center of California politics simply vanished, and with it went compromise and deliberation. The state legislature, which, during the Reagan, Jerry Brown, and Deukmejian years had continued to play a useful role in resolving conflicts between left and right, now merely echoed those conflicts.

The influential establishment crumbled when business leaders abdicated their stake in California's long-term future, as many of the state's major corporations either disappeared or became adjuncts of global companies. In 1983, for instance, when the state faced a $3 billion budget deficit, Bank of America CEO Sam Armacost went to Sacramento to offer Deukmejian an $850 million loan. That wouldn't happen today. Bank of America left its San Francisco headquarters after it merged with NationsBank of Charlotte, North Carolina in 1998. Even the *Los Angeles Times* is now owned by Chicago's Tribune Company. There are still some business leaders, such as Netflix CEO Reed Hastings, who play a constructive role in state politics, but they lack the stature and clout of David Packard or Dorothy Chandler.

California businesses now operate primarily through three groups: the California Business Roundtable, the California Chamber of Commerce, and the corporate California Taxpayers' Association. In 1978, all three opposed Proposition 13. But now they often find themselves allied in state politics with the more conservative Howard Jarvis Taxpayers' Association, rejecting any increase in taxes and blindly insisting that Proposition 13 has had no ill effects. Bill Hauck, the Roundtable's director, dismisses as a "myth" the claim that Proposition 13 hurts state revenue. "California will always have scarce revenues," says Hauck. "You could raise taxes, and lower spending, and you'd still have scarce resources." Hauck also dismisses the connection between state spending and education. "If there were a direct correlation between money and achievement, then DC schools would be getting the best education. Money isn't necessarily the answer."

The business leaders even deny the obvious—that, by calculating taxes on old homes and factories on the 1975 basis and new homes and factories at prevailing market rates, Proposition 13 has rewarded economic stasis and penalized new investment. According to an advisory board member at Intel—a Santa Clara company—which recently announced a new $3 billion chip factory in Arizona, didn't even consider building the facility in California partly because of the state's screwball tax structure. But Larry McCarthy, who heads the California Taxpayers' Association, says that Proposition 13 actually helps business. "Our members believe the property tax is one source of stability. ... When we make an investment, we know what the property tax is going to be." Like the legislature, the state's business leadership has ceased to be a counterweight to the centrifugal forces pulling California politics apart; instead, it is now one of those forces.

STATE LEGISLATORS CAN cater to the demands of their most vocal constituents, whether on the right or the left, but California's governors don't have that luxury. The public, and particularly the growing segment of voters who identify themselves as "independents," wants governors to be genuine centrists. But—with the public divided over what policies to pursue, with the legislature paralyzed by Proposition 140, and with business leaders focused on their short-term bottom lines—there is

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simply no consensus on which to base a genuine centrism. Governors find themselves with three equally unpalatable choices: to embrace business and the Jarvis Republicans' conservative agenda, to go with liberal Democrats who want to increase spending and modify Proposition 13, or to equivocate in the hope that an economic downturn won't force them to choose between left and right. Whichever alternative they have chosen, they have eventually found themselves in the political doghouse.

Wilson, who had bitterly opposed Proposition 13 when he served as mayor of San Diego, took a centrist path during his first year in office. But, with the economy in the doldrums and Republicans infuriated by his willingness to raise taxes, he soon tacked sharply to the right on taxes and spending. Trailing his opponent in the polls in 1994, he tried to blame the state's fiscal woes on illegal immigrants by backing the punitive Proposition 187, which denied public services (such as health care and education) to illegal immigrants and their children. But, while the strategy got Wilson reelected, it didn't restore his popularity and it left the Republican Party in shambles.

Davis, like Wilson, promised a centrist government. *The San Francisco Chronicle* termed him a "moderate's moderate," and, in his 1999 inaugural address, he promised to "bring down the curtain on the politics of division." Davis initially benefited from the high-tech boom of the late '90s. Armed with revenue from capital gains, he cut taxes and increased spending, while ignoring the underlying contradictions in the state economy. When the high-tech bubble burst in 2000, state revenue fell by 15 percent. Davis first waffled but finally agreed to revoke his earlier tax cuts, including his revocation of an unpopular tax on automobiles. True, Davis was hurt by his failure to respond quickly to the blackouts that plagued California in 2001, but it was his willingness to reinstate the car tax two years later that precipitated his recall.

Liberals later criticized Davis for not taking advantage of his early popularity to advance structural reforms, but Davis had good reason to equivocate. If he had broken with the Proposition 13 orthodoxy, he would have faced united opposition from business and Republican conservatives and skepticism from Democrats and independents who benefit from lower property taxes. Current Democratic front-runner Angelides is skittish about criticizing Proposition 13. Asked at a June press conference about how he can promise to have "a truly balanced budget" without undoing the proposition's legacy, he fell back on the usual dodge of closing "$2 billion in corporate tax loopholes." Pressed later in a one-on-one interview, he reluctantly acknowledges that he would like to tax all businesses at "fair market value" and eliminate the two-thirds requirement on tax increases. Bob Mulholland, the fiesty campaign adviser to the California Democratic Party, simply dismisses the possibility of reforming Proposition 13. "Not in the foreseeable future," he says. Even Lenny Goldberg, director of the liberal California Tax Reform Association, is pessimistic. Goldberg, who has already seen a succession of reform initiatives go down to defeat, says, "It's going to take more research and more grassroots building."

In his first months in office, Schwarzenegger clearly recognized that California voters did not elect him because he was a Republican, but because they thought he was beyond party and interest. In his first State of the State speech in January 2004, he pledged three times to follow a "bipartisan" course. To close the $15 billion budget deficit he inherited, he crafted two winning initiatives, Propositions 57 and 58 (a bond issue and a proposal that required enactment of a balanced budget, plus the establishment of a reserve fund), with the support of Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein and State Controller Steve Westly. He appointed Democratic as well as Republican judges. He negotiated his budget plans with business and labor, including the powerful California Teachers Association. He backed a popular initiative to fund stem-cell research.

But, as governor, Schwarzenegger's centrism, like that of Davis, has proved primarily cosmetic. Neither in his campaign, when he chastised supporter Warren Buffett for criticizing Proposition 13, nor in his first year, did he address structural reform. Proposition 57 merely deferred the state's fiscal crisis by borrowing $15 billion in bonds, while the loophole-riven Proposition 58 committed the state government to offering, but not necessarily achieving, balanced budgets. Last fall, faced with continuing deficits and restive Republican conservatives, he decided, as he tells it, to "fix the broken system." But, for his fix, he looked to the right, adopting the economic strategy promoted by the Chamber of Commerce, the California Taxpayers' Association, and the Business Roundtable. Following this playbook, Schwarzenegger blamed public employees for the state's economic problems. He refused to enforce a state law reducing nurse-patient staffing ratios. He reneged on an agreement with the California Teachers Association to put back into the budget $2 billion in education spending that the union had agreed to cut from the previous year's budget. And he called for privatizing the pension programs for police, firefighters, and other public workers. That plan would have cut state costs, but it would have also killed off the state's pension agency, CalPERS, which, as the nation's foremost proponent of shareholders' rights, had become a thorn in the side of corporate CEOs.

Conservative Republicans applauded these initiatives, but the rest of the electorate recoiled. Californians actually take a positive view of organized labor—according to a June poll by San Jose State University's Survey and Policy Research Institute, they approve of unions by 57 to 32 percent—and are even more favorably inclined toward nurses, teachers, firefighters, and police. Schwarzenegger got in a particularly nasty battle with the powerful and popular California Nurses Association, denouncing them as "special interests" and boasting that he is "always kicking their butts." When nurses and other workers began demonstrat-

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ing and running ads against Schwarzenegger, his popularity began to decline. Asked by the San Jose State survey whom they would back in a November initiative battle between teachers and school administrators on one side and Schwarzenegger on the other, respondents chose teachers and administrators by 60 to 31 percent.

Schwarzenegger lost important support among the state's independent voters, who now make up almost a quarter of the electorate and serve as the swing voters in state elections. According to voting analyst Mark Baldassare of the Public Policy Institute of California, they are primarily white, middle-class suburbanites who are socially liberal and fiscally moderate and who fear that government and the parties have been captured by special interests. In the October 2003 exit polls, 54 percent of them favored a recall, and they backed Schwarzenegger over his nearest rival by 15 percent. But, as Schwarzenegger began touring nationally to raise money from wealthy donors for his initiatives, erstwhile supporters like Derek Cressman, director of the nonpartisan watchdog group TheRestofUs.org, expressed their disillusionment. "He told us that he would not need to take money from special interests," Cressman wrote on his organization's website last February, "Yet now he's become the Donald Trump of campaign cash—he just can't get enough." Schwarzenegger's following among independents fell accordingly. In a mid-June Field poll, only 36 percent of moderates and 35 percent of independents said they would vote for his reelection.

Even some Republican strategists acknowledge that Schwarzenegger misjudged the electorate. Dan Schnur, who served as Wilson's press secretary, says of Schwarzenegger's fall from grace, "I say this as someone who supports Schwarzenegger's reform agenda, but that reform agenda disproportionately reflects the conservative [pro-business] aspects of his ideological agenda and less the moderate. So you have a lot of centrist voters who no longer see the leavening from the cultural and social issues."

With his popularity falling, Schwarzenegger has now tried to revive the centrism of his first year. After appearing in Sacramento with Escutia and the adoring schoolchildren, he toured a blue jeans factory in Vernon that was caught underpaying its workers last year. He praised the factory for improving its working conditions, but promised to enforce the state's labor laws rigorously. The next day, Schwarzenegger unveiled a commercial with him and *Twins* co-star Danny DeVito promoting the forthcoming California State Fair. These gestures might help him temporarily lift his sagging poll numbers, but they won't go anywhere near fixing the "broken system." That may be more than even the former bodybuilder can handle. ■

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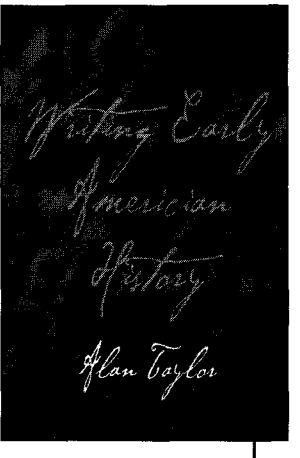

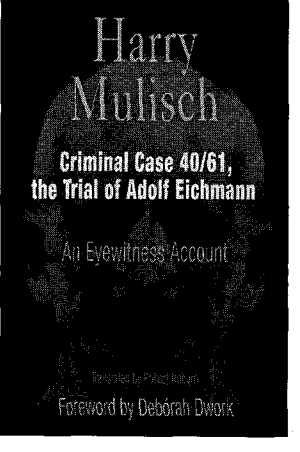

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Still Wondering

JIM JARMUSCH'S FIRST FEATURE, *Stranger Than Paradise* (1984), was unmistakably the work of an ornery, purposeful director who disregarded everything but his intent, which won us to his intent. The film treated the lives of three young Hungarian immigrants with a distanced concern that made me think of Beckett, displaying (to quote myself) "the same patience on the part of tiny individuals toward a huge blundering universe." Some years later I saw the film again and was relieved to like it again, because Jarmusch had since made several weaker pictures. His craggy selfhood, in most of these later films, seemed more like solipsistic prank than ornery dedication.

BROKEN FLOWERS
(Focus)

2046
(Sony Pictures Classics)

All these films were independent jobs, though, like Gus Van Sant, Jarmusch sometimes had big names in them, actors seemingly eager for a work holiday away from the factory. Unlike Van Sant, though, he has never been anywhere near Oscar territory. Now, however, Jarmusch pretty decisively joins the big names in their usual habitat. **BROKEN FLOWERS** is not a Jarmusch porcupine; it is a moderately domesticated animal.

His screenplay, based on an idea from two other people, is about a middle-aged man revisiting some women in his past. The shape of the film is a reminder of other episodic visits to the past: Duvivier's *Un carnet de bal* (1937), in which a widow looks up men whose names she finds on an old dance card, and Tornatore's *Everybody's Fine* (1990), in which an elderly man visits his five far-flung children. In *Broken Flowers*, a fiftyish stolid bachelor named Don Johnston gets an unsigned typewritten letter from a lover twenty years in the past, saying that he had fathered a son, now nineteen, who is coming to find him. Urged by a friend, Don goes to visit the five most likely women to find out which of them sent the letter and to meet his son.

Jarmusch knew that the film depended hugely on the actor playing the revenant, and here he has done well. Bill Murray is Don, and that fact is almost all that needs to be said about the performance. The secret of Murray's success is that without saying or doing much, he can convince us that his character is wiser, wittier, and sadder than anyone else around him. He brings it off again in *Broken Flowers*.

As for the series of visits that Don makes, they form a set of brief one-act plays in which a woman willy-nilly reveals herself. To each of these women he brings a bouquet. One (Sharon Stone) is a widow, a professional closet organizer with a teenage daughter who parades around in the buff. Warmly welcoming though the widow is, she has no son. Then Frances Conroy plays the wife of a wealthy real estate man who has become her husband in drag. Again, no son. Jessica Lange plays a highly successful animal communicator (not analyst, she insists) who has scant time for Don. No son. Tilda Swinton plays the mate of a rough motorcyclist who is something less than cordial. Some teasing clues here, but no son. The last visit is—had to be—the best. In a cemetery, Don lays his bouquet on a grave.

All these episodes are deftly handled, but ultimately disappointing—doubly. Don is disappointed because he doesn't find out who sent him the anonymous letter, and we are disappointed because the five-part expedition doesn't arrive anywhere. Duvivier's and Tornatore's films have underlying views that are dramatized. *Broken Flowers* is just a set of sketches. At the end, Don's encounter with a teenage backpacker in his hometown shows how far his inquiry has affected him, but it concludes nothing. The five episodes in *Broken Flowers* are good enough to make us expect that the picture has a theme, but it hasn't.

It just leaves us wondering. Which of these women sent the letter and whether there really is a son are questions that Jarmusch doesn't answer. Worse than that, he doesn't suggest that the absence of answers is the point of the picture. The possibility of the past becoming mysterious long after one has left it is intriguing, but Jarmusch misses this basic idea, or any other, and simply focuses on the five visits themselves.

Wong Kar-wai is a Hong Kong director who has been exalted as a master of eroticism by not showing much of it. The Wong film that began the hallelujah chorus in America was *In the Mood for Love* (2000), which featured shadowy corridors in which a man and a woman looked longingly at each other from time to time. Wong's new film, **2046**, takes its title from a hotel room number. Most of the longing this time takes place inside rooms, because this time the longing has some physical results.

The story is multiplex and unclear. A Chinese newspaperman is in Hong Kong in 1966 and for a few years thereafter, writing pulp novels as well as reporting. In his hotel and elsewhere he gets involved with a gambling queen, a call girl, and the hotel owner's daughter, who loves a Japanese man (which infuriates her father). These stories are interwoven to no architectural or dramatic purpose, although they give Wong plenty of chances to use his favorite device—a two-shot that lingers on the face of a man, then reverses and lingers on the face of a woman. In addition to these shots we get some of the staples of arty films, such as immense close-ups of doorknobs and (one I never thought I'd see again) a close-up of a faucet from which one drop falls.

On this collection Wong stitches some fantastic embroidery about a land to which a sci-fi train travels, taking people in search of lost memories who never return; there is also a sequence with an-

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droids, robotic call girls. How all these elements relate to one another merely leaves us—as with Jarmusch—wondering.

Ziyi Zhang as the call girl has some color and verve, but Tony Leung, who is one of Wong's favorite actors, reminds us of old-time film stars who were just about capable of doing what the director told them to do. Gong Li, an actress of true talent (*The Story of Qiu Ju*, for instance), is wasted in a minor role. A curiosity in the picture is that the hotel owner is fond of opera—Western opera—and plays records loudly to drown out unwelcome noise in other rooms. So, all through this ultra-Oriental story, we hear "Casta diva," played or sung. Bellini might have been amused; quite differently, so was I. ■

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

Theater of the Mushy Tushy

THE MOMENT THE AUDIENCE is solemnly ushered into an improvised tent in Damrosch Park for Ariane Mnouchkine's latest Théâtre du Soleil epic, it is clear that we are being prepared for martyrdom. Today there is a whole branch of theater devoted to making you feel not just emotionally responsible for man's universal inhumanity to man, but physically uncomfortable as well. Mnouchkine, always an intrepid theater artist, offers the latest example. Even her title—**LE DERNIER CARAVANSÉRAIL (ODYSSÉES)**—tortures the tongue.

LE DERNIER CARAVANSÉRAIL (ODYSSÉES)
(Lincoln Center Festival 2005)

One popular way to torment the audience is by means of that theater equivalent of the medieval rack, first dreamed up by Peter Brook, called the straight-back bench. (Mnouchkine has designed her own version of these cramped bleachers and imported them all the way from Paris.) Spending long hours sitting on this iron maiden, generally in theater spaces distressed at great expense in order to make them appear impoverished, is virtually guaranteed to induce sciatica, slipped discs, and spinal stenosis—a treatment devised, I suspect, for the purpose of retaliating against bourgeois audiences for their elitist privileges. Another form of punishment is to charge astronomical prices ($161 per ticket, in this instance) for the privilege of balancing yourself for hours on one buttock while trying not to fall off the bench. We've had Epic Theater, Theater of the Grotesque, Theater of the Absurd, Theater of the Ridiculous, Poor Theater, and the like. Now we've got Theater of the Mushy Tushy.

A related form of torture is the intolerable length of the performances. Long ago I imagined that the theater of the future would last either an hour and a half or a week and a half. I hate it when my prophesies actually come true. A few of these stage marathons, of course, have been well worth the long sit, such as Brook's nine-hour *Mahabharata*, Robert Lepage's eight-hour *Seven Streams of the River Ota*, and Robert Wilson's five-evening *the CIVIL warS* (relatively succinct compared with his seven-day *Ka MOUNTain and GARDenia Terrace*). Others can make you feel like an enlisted man on an extended tour of duty with all leave privileges canceled. By comparison with the longest journeys, Ariane Mnouchkine's latest epic is fairly brief (only six and a half hours, with a short break for dinner). It just seemed very long. Wilson, Brook, and Lepage have recently been working in more economical forms, generally with written texts. So should Mnouchkine, or she risks losing her audience.

I don't wish to appear heartless or frivolous regarding the subject of this work: the plight of immigrants from fundamentalist Muslim societies (Afghanistan, Chechnya, Iran, Iraq, and so on), and their efforts to find refuge in countries that will accept them (New Zealand,

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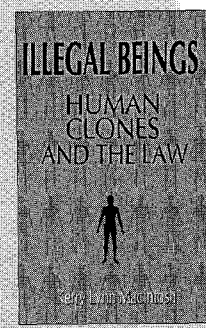

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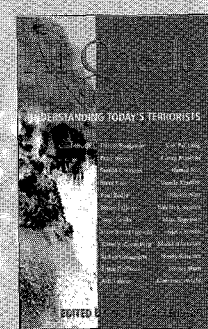

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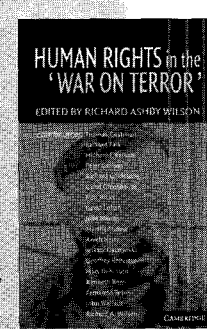

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France, and England) and in those that won't (Australia and Indonesia). Immigration is obviously on many peoples' minds today. It has attracted the attention of many solicitous theater directors as well. Peter Sellars's version of Euripides's *The Children of Herakles* at the American Repertory Theatre in 2003 featured real immigrant children on stage, who were also required to walk through the audience with outstretched hands, while ethnic food was served during intermission, and journalist Christopher Lydon did pre-show interviews with Cambodian refugees who had fled the Khmer Rouge (followed by a chorus of "That's Entertainment").

At least since the Royal Shakespeare Company version of *Nicholas Nickleby*, theater people have been using emotional stratagems to make prosperous audiences feel guilty about the plight of the less fortunate. But apart from raising consciousness (and inducing guilt) regarding the wretched of the earth, these affairs have no apparent practical function. What are audiences actually supposed to do? Storm the INS? Sponsor maids and gardeners for visas? Adopt an immigrant family?

To be fair, Mnouchkine handles this complicated subject with a minimum of self-righteousness. And she has taken a problematic ethnic group—not the innocent victims of Darfur or Sarajevo, not the massacred Tutsis or starving Ethiopians, but the subjugated women and children of the Taliban and other Islamic fundamentalists, many of the characters shrouded under body-length burkhas or weighted with sternum-long beards that rob them of much individuality. Even before the London bombings, Mnouchkine was perfectly aware of Western suspicions regarding male Islamic immigrants. She has been quoted as saying that a nation has an obvious right to protect itself against an influx of refugees that might include terrorists, though she has also criticized the hypocrisy of Westerners who accept the oil of "unacceptable regimes" while refusing their human jetsam. The politics of this event, in short, are not simplistic or unpersuasive. What the production lacks is a reasonable aesthetic, a sense of economy and form, an overarching unity.

What it needs, in sum, is a dramatist. Mnouchkine is a supremely gifted auteur, but an auteur is not an author. Like Brook, she is at her best working with an inspired text, as in her Shakespeare cycle (*Richard II*, *Twelfth Night*, *Henry IV*) and her Greek epic (*Les Atrides*). When she and her company (often as many as seventy-five actors) improvise their own texts, the work comes off as chaotic and confused. *Le dernier caravansérail (Odyssées)*, or *LDCO* (I promise this is the last time I will make you read the whole clumsy title), is based on numerous letters from displaced persons seeking asylum in foreign lands. Some of these testimonies are moving and poignant, but the piece is just a series of fragments, lacking a guiding hand to unify them into a coherent whole. (Mnouchkine takes credit only for originating "*le proposition*," which, if true, suggests that collective democracy is not the best system for formulating theatrical works of art.)

The Théâtre du Soleil, Mnouchkine's thirty-six-member commune, has been preparing this material through workshopped improvisations for a number of years. The research is prodigious, and its results are sometimes startling. This is a collective rightfully proud of its accomplishments and confident in itself, whether making up in full view of the audience as you enter, or hugging each other in the last of their carefully choreographed curtain calls. But for all the community feeling, the company makes only a minimal effort at communication with the audience. Spoken in at least ten languages (including Farsi, Afghan, and Russian), often in tones beneath the level of audibility, *LDCO* desperately needs a readable libretto. What it provides instead are mostly illegible supertitles in a variety of unreadable types, projected onto any available surface, even stage moldings, under lighting conditions that often render them indecipherable. As a result, your back strain is aggravated by eye strain.

The piece has one unifying idea, though, suggested in its subtitle. *LDCO* is a modern *Odyssey*—not about militarily exhausted people trying to return home after a war, but about religiously oppressed people trying to leave home after a revolution. As in the *Odyssey*, the most exciting events occur during storms at sea. Mnouchkine has devised at least two stunning episodes, both featuring fragile boats on a boiling ocean, that leave you with your heart in your mouth, even though the tumult is only simulated, Asian-style, by means of billowing silken cloths, roaring noises, and flimsy props. (The designer, Guy-Claude François, is one of the creative heroes of the evening.) Wooden crafts are hoisted up on top of huge waves, their passengers peeping out from two separate decks, tossed back and forth. One falls over the side and is deposited back on the boat, all to the accompaniment of rousing recorded music (created by Jean-Jacques Lemetre, a white-bearded maestro whose rapport with the audience is signified by a bemused glance at us on every entrance). This is pure spectacle, the sort of thing at which this company excels.

Most of the other scenes occur in three-dimensional boxes that are pushed on and off the stage. (The characters, too, are rolled in on trolleys—no one in this continually restless production seems prepared to walk.) There are innumerable episodes regarding the unsuccessful efforts of some Chechnyans to jump on top of a moving Eurorail train, having paid their dues to a particularly brutal and venal overseer. There is a scene involving a woman accused of having premarital sex, whipped by the puritanical Taliban, who later hang her by the neck in a crimson dress. One young Afghan enjoys watching videos, so he is summarily shot in his own living room. Another pair of scenes takes place in a Melbourne appeals court, where a Muslim refugee, appearing on a television screen, is coldly informed that "Australia does not accept you." And the final scene of the play involves the reunion on the cliffs of Dover of a large Muslim family, both religious and secular members, sharing a picnic while birds squeal, a foghorn wails, and a sitar plays. It is perhaps the only serene, peaceful episode in the entire production, a rare instance of communion when a refugee family comes together without fear or persecution.

There are hundreds of similar characters in the play. That is the problem, from a formal point of view. This is not the *Odyssey* but a series of *Odyssées*, featuring not one Odysseus but a hundred; not a single person's encounter with a Cyclops or a Siren, but the tribulations of multitudes. In short, the individual in this work is engulfed by history. As Stalin once cruelly remarked, while one man's death is a tragedy, the death of millions is merely a statistic.

Mnouchkine's stagecraft is dazzling, and she has not been niggardly about the amount of human misery she is willing to show us on stage. But am I alone in sensing something condescending about the way this material has been collected

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and presented to Western audiences? One of the vestiges of a lost colonialism is the belief that great wrongs can be righted without the power of jurisdiction. This leads to the expression of sympathy without consequence, the exercise of conscience with no real hope of remedy. It leads, in short, to theater as a form of therapy. But art is not designed to do the work of politics. It is impotent to eradicate great suffering; the best it can do is describe that suffering artfully, so that we may share its pity and terror. But this needs the skeptical, ruthless, penetrating control of a great imaginative artist capable of ordering these parts into a coherent whole.

Too often in recent years, stage invention has been made to substitute for creative imagination, resulting in something that may be at the same time superbly theatricalized and insufficiently dramatized. Which is another way of saying that perhaps it is time for gifted auteurs such as Mnouchkine to re-unite with inspired authors. ■

Sherwin B. Nuland

My Son, the Doctor

The saga of Jews and medicine.

I.

WHY IS IT, IN FACT, that so many Jews have become doctors? Here follows a twice-told tale that bears telling once again.

Imprisoned in a tower in Madrid, disabled by syphilis and further weakened by an abscess in his scalp, the French king Francis I asked of his captor, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, that he send his finest Jewish physician to attempt a cure. At some point after the doctor arrived, Francis, in an attempt at light conversation, asked him if he was not yet tired of waiting for the messiah to come. To his chagrin, he was told that his healer was not actually Jewish, but a *converso* who had long been a baptized Christian. Francis dismissed him, and arranged to be treated by a genuine Jew, brought all the way from Constantinople.

Apocryphal or not, this charming story has endured because it illustrates the position of the Jewish doctor during the Middle Ages and Renaissance. The narrative's supposed events took place at a fixed point in time, some years before the death of Francis in 1547, but they form part of a genre of anecdote that had existed for centuries. Though not as pervasive as it once was, the legend of the Jewish doctor's special skills is still current today, enduring in attenuated form alongside the legend of the profession's attractiveness to young Jews as a career. Intertwined with myth, the legendary relationship between the Jew and the art of healing continues to evoke a variety of responses, ranging from humorous comment to scholarly study.

To explore that relationship, several questions are easily framed and may be succinctly stated. Three questions, to be precise. Why have so many Jews been drawn to the study of medicine, far out of proportion to their numbers? Why have so many achieved distinction, far out of proportion to their numbers? And why, at least in centuries past, have Jewish doctors been thought to have accomplished so many more cures than their Gentile counterparts, far out of proportion to their numbers?

Not surprisingly, the answers to these questions are multifactorial, multilayered, and multigenerational. But like so many multiplicities, they can be comprehended by recognizing that the answers are ultimately woven into a unity, not only of origin but of intent. Though the origin and the intent are now obscured by strata of time and cultural change, they are nevertheless there to see, if we are willing to look closely and cast aside—even if briefly—the religious skepticism of our age.

As in so many areas of Jewish questing, we can serve our purpose no better than by turning to the writings of the great philosopher and physician Maimonides, in this case the fifth of the so-called *Eight Chapters*, or *Shemonah Perakim*, with which he prefaced his exegesis of *Pirkei Avot*, or *Ethics of the Fathers*, in his commentary on the *Mishnah*, completed in 1168, when he was thirty years old. There he articulates a theme that would continue to appear in his writings for the rest of his life, summarized by his statement that the real purpose of wealth or any other acquisition

> should be to expend it for noble purposes, and to employ it for the maintenance of the body and the preservation of life, so that its owner may obtain a knowledge of God, in so far as that is vouchsafed unto man.
>
> From this point of view, the study of medicine has a very great influence on the acquisition of the virtues and of the knowledge of God, as well as on the attainment of true spiritual happiness. Therefore, its study and acquisition are pre-eminently important religious activities.

It was a Maimonidean precept that the purpose of keeping the body healthy is to enable the unhindered pursuit of knowledge of God, and of the perfect morality for which God is the model. The study of medicine, in sum, is a religious activity.

IN SAYING THIS, MAIMONIDES WAS echoing a thesis promulgated by the rabbis of the Talmud, who spoke of the physician as a messenger—or in certain ways even a partner—of God. This Talmudic concept, like so many others, has its origins and its inspiration in the Torah. The stringent directives about public health, hygiene, preventive medicine, and sanitation laid out in Leviticus are expanded in the Talmud to cover every facet of personal behavior. The aim of these injunctions being cleanliness in the presence of God, the underlying message of the Talmudic sages is the biblical link between physical and moral purity, always emphasizing that maintenance of health is maintenance of life: the obligation of every Jew, though it might mean disobeying commandments. All Jewish law, even the Decalogue, may be violated in the interest of saving a life, the only exceptions being the injunctions against blasphemy, adultery, incest, and murder. "First choose life," enjoins God, linking

Sherwin B. Nuland's new book, MAIMONIDES, *will be published by Schocken and Nextbook in October.*

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the acceptance of God's precepts to the embrace of life. And by the very word "choose," God makes it clear that man has freedom of will.

It is in the notion of free will, I believe, that the essence of the Jewish approach to healing is to be found. The concept is repeatedly proclaimed in scripture, in the rabbinic literature, and in the writings of many Jewish philosophers. Throughout the Jewish tradition, one is aware of the tension between the concept of God's omnipotent will and the concept of humankind's free will, manifest in an unspoken compromise that leaves the care of the body to man. In this matter, the intervention of God is not to be assumed.

IN THIS WAY THE RABBIS OF THE Talmud are rather like the Greeks, whose most lasting contribution to medical theory was to separate their worship of the gods from their nature-based methods of diagnosis and therapy. This approach is exemplified by the Hippocratic Oath and the entire corpus of classical Greek medical literature, in which the physicians swear by Apollo and Aesculapius, and then go on to proclaim the principles of a school of healing independent of direct reliance on these or any other gods. Not only that, but some of the leading practitioners of Hippocratic medicine saw the study of their art as a way of understanding the divine, just as the Jews did.

And they went even further. Galen of Pergamon, the most influential physician who has ever lived, believed that the proper way to worship the Divinity is not with prayer and sacrifice but with experiment and observation. Late in the second century C.E., he described his greatest anatomical work, *De Usu Partium*, as "the sacred discourse which I am composing as a true hymn of praise to our Creator." To him, learning about the body was the sure way to learn about the godhead. He wrote: "And I consider that I am really showing him reverence, not when I offer him unnumbered hecatombs of bulls and burn incense of cassia worth ten thousand talents, but when I myself first learn to know his wisdom, power and goodness and then make them known to others."

Galen's way of knowing and making known was to experiment on animals in order to learn and then demonstrate the principles of anatomy and physiology. Though he believed that the divinity he called the Creator made the universe and everything in it according to a preordained plan, he never called on anything but his own skill in treating the sick.

From the beginning, this was precisely the way in which Jewish doctors approached the healing of their patients. In fact, their entire system of medicine was Greek, in the Middle Ages and for centuries afterward. There was never a Jewish medicine in the same way that there was an Egyptian or a Chinese or an Ayurvedic or a Western medicine. Then and now, Jewish medicine has been the medicine of the culture in which it is practiced. In Talmudic times, it was strongly influenced by the heritage of the Greeks, and not only because of their similar notions concerning the physician's independent role in healing. The remarkably learned concepts of anatomy and physiology—as well as preventive and clinical medicine—found in the Talmud can be traced to a broad familiarity with Hippocratic and Galenic understanding of such matters, and the influence of Hellenism.

IF ITS FUNCTION IS TO HELP MAN know God and to achieve the moral life, then healing must be based on ethical principles. Here, too, the Greek and the Jewish systems of medicine were parallel. Just as they are credited with being the first to separate religious faith from the treatment of disease, so also have the Greeks been credited with introducing ethics into the teachings of medical care. But the Torah preceded them. Either way, the interlocking methods and aims of the Jewish and the Greek physicians—based partly on shared notions of the divinity's distanced role, and partly on the commingling of cultures during the Hellenistic period of about 280 to 160 B.C.E.—would have vast implications in creating the background against which the three questions have been framed, which are here being addressed.

Even the origin of the Hebrew word for doctor, *rofe*, has within it the implication of independent action on the part of the physician. It means "to heal" in the sense of "to repair." The basic image is the mending of a torn place, or the sewing of a seam to bring parts together. As *raphe*, the word exists in modern anatomic terminology, to designate any of several places in the body where tissues from each side are joined in the midline. It appears as healing by God in Numbers 12:13 and Jeremiah 3:22 and 30:17, among other places. Applied to healing by humans, it is a reference that requires the hands of the practitioner and the actual doing of something. It is interpreted as a *human* intervention. (Modern dictionaries erroneously trace the etymology of *raphe* to Greek.)

And so the rabbis of the Talmud taught in the presence of a heritage of ethics and with the conviction that the preservation of life is a basic teaching of their religious system of values, to be carried out by human action, existing as an instrument of divine will, yet applied independently of the divinity's direct intervention. Though God is the ultimate healer—and indeed, in several dramatic biblical passages God chooses to intercede in order either to cause or to cure illness—God is not to be used by mankind as a medicine. When sickness occurs, a doctor is to be sought out, an imperative clearly articulated by Maimonides: "One who is ill has not only the right but also the duty to seek medical aid."

II.

BUT THE JEWISH DOCTORS OF the time entered into their work with yet another assumption, which may be of critical importance in their history of accomplishment. This was the concept—articulated centuries later in the *Shulhan Arukh*, the sixteenth-century legal code that quickly achieved canonical status—that the *rofe*, though acting independently and with free will, is the individual messenger or deputy of God, and is therefore irreplaceable in healing by anyone else. This specificity was interpreted to mean that he himself must respond when called upon, because it may be in the divine will that he alone is capable of that particular mission of healing. This tradition may sound familiar to us: it is issued in the sense of personal responsibility—or, as today's bioethicists might put it, the deontological obligation—that has characterized those physicians determined to excel because they are committed to the duty imposed by their own uniqueness. Such values as these are not easily thrown off with the passage even of centuries, because they are transmitted from teachers to pupils in a tradition going back millennia. Though they are hardly any longer uniquely Jewish, they entered our medical culture with monotheism.

It is in the time of the Talmudic sages (the third to the sixth centuries C.E.)

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that the relationship between Jews and medicine began to form the social foundation by which it would be characterized to the present day. The rabbis were not bloodless scholars, but committed members of the community whose experiences of daily life equipped them to understand the moment-to-moment existence that they addressed in their discussions of the Law. They lived in the real world, in which prayer and cogitation were considered insufficient without real engagement and real work. Their position would much later be stated by Nahmanides, the intellectual giant of Spanish Jewry in the thirteenth century, who declared that "it is part of the service of the Lord to attend to the affairs of the world." It is hardly a source of wonder that 213 of the 613 commandments enumerated by the sages and eventually codified by Maimonides have in one way or another to do with care of the body.

Being committed to a principle that the Talmudic sage Rabbi Zadok articulated with the words, "Make not of the Torah a crown wherewith to aggrandize thyself, nor a spade wherewith to dig" (and also stated by the great Hillel, who said that "whosoever derives a profit for himself from the words of the Torah is helping in his own destruction"), the scholars of that period and afterward rejected payment for their religious services and sought secular employment. Given the Jewish emphasis on bodily health, it was only natural that some of them turned to healing as a source of income. It was in this way that the association of medical skills and rabbinic wisdom became, in a sense, formalized. From that point on and continuing well into the Renaissance, many physicians were rabbis. It has been estimated that during the Arabic period, approximately half of the Jewish doctors were rabbis. It should not be forgotten that the word "rabbi" derives from the Hebrew *rav*, meaning "teacher"; and "doctor" derives from the Latin verb *docere*, meaning "to teach."

Unlike the medical practitioners of medieval Christian Europe, the majority of whom were self-proclaimed and sometimes illiterate healers, the Jewish physician was likely to have mastered the intricacies of his art as taught by skilled members of the profession. This meant not only that so many of them were valued because they were among the most secularly educated of the Jews, but also that they were leaders of the communities in which they lived. The tradition that doctors were among the leadership enhanced the prestige and the social standing of the profession, and as Jewish doctors became more sought out by prominent Muslims and Christians, they gradually came to represent their coreligionists before the Gentile rulers. Power often passed into their hands, and increasingly many of them were looked to as men of authority not only among the Jews, but also in the dominant non-Jewish world. In these ways, the stature of the Jewish physician became ever more elevated even during centuries of unrelieved oppression.

This would be vastly enhanced following the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, when the lowering of cultural barriers allowed even greater social mobility and contact between Jews and Christians. During those times, when the education of Jews was gradually becoming less confined to religious schooling, the esteem in which secularly knowl-

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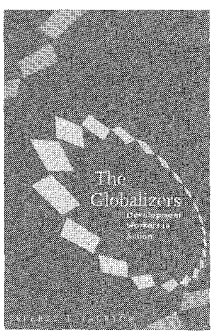

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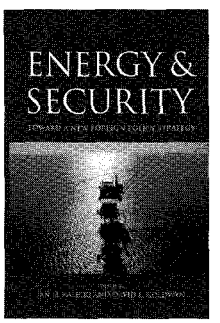

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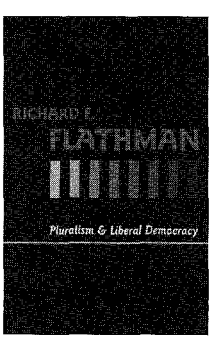

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edgeable doctors were held became even greater. Comfortable in both worlds, they were seen as idealized figures who attained worldly accomplishment while resisting assimilation.

THE GENTILE SEEKING-OUT OF Jewish physicians had several causes, the first of which was simply that any individual among them was, for the reasons given, likely to be more skilled than his non-Jewish counterpart, especially in Christian lands. Some achieved considerable renown, and their services were requested by powerful people separated by long distances, adding to the general impression among the multitude of citizens that there was something special about Jewish healers. Such an impression was hardly lessened by a disquieting perception that these devious strangers in their Christian midst, who spoke among themselves in an inscrutable tongue and called upon a God whose ways seemed so cryptic, had special hidden knowledge, perhaps of the occult. And thus their very differentness, and the apprehension that it aroused, meant that superior, even demonic, healing gifts were often attributed to them. The mystique of the Jewish doctor not only added to his reputation, it likely had a placebo effect on many a patient. It is hardly a wonder that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Jews were doctors in numbers far exceeding their representation in the general populace. Only 5 percent of the twenty thousand people living in Marseilles during the first half of the fourteenth century were Jewish, but they accounted for ten of the city's twenty-three physicians.

The conditions in which Jews lived also contributed to their medical expertise. Era after era, Jews had been forced to flee from country to country, usually taking few of their possessions and often able to retain little of their money. Medical knowledge was not only transferable; until licensing laws were established in various territories around the late eighteenth century, it was a means of starting up an enterprise immediately upon arrival in a foreign place. Before the complexities of modern science began to overtake it in the early nineteenth century, it could be taught by father to son, or within a community. Not permitted to own land until relatively recent times (and in any event unable to put it into a suitcase), Jews looked on medicine as a form of un-real estate, valued because of the very real conditions to which they had to respond realistically.

Traveling as they did, Jews learned many languages, and the medical men among them had contact with physicians from many areas, adding to their store of information and their comprehension of available texts, as well as enabling them to study the drugs used by local practitioners. In addition, the shared ability to speak and read Hebrew enabled them to transmit knowledge to one another. Thus their very privations added to their skills. Jews were of necessity cosmopolitan, and so was their medicine.

Fluency with languages and the transmitted history of familiarity with Hellenistic culture made the Jewish physician a valuable intermediary of Greek medicine—which continued to live as the scientific medicine of the Middle Ages and Renaissance—to the Christian and Arabic worlds. Not only were Jews among the translators of the ancient Greek texts into Arabic during the approximately six centuries when that language dominated medical thought, they also produced versions in Hebrew, to be disseminated among themselves throughout Europe and the Muslim lands. Consequently, Jews had ready access to the most highly regarded of medical texts, which were generally unavailable to doctors on the Continent until the end of the twelfth century, if not later, when Latin translations were published, some of them by Jewish scholars. In fact, even the few Christian medical writings of this period were translated into Hebrew as well as Arabic, so Jewish doctors had access to everything then available in any literary form, whether emanating from Europe or from the Arab lands. It is hardly a wonder that more than a few Jews were members of the faculty of the first great university medical school, at Salerno, in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. When the schools at Montpellier and Paris were established in the thirteenth century, Jewish physicians were called to teach there as well.

And always there remained the religious basis upon which healing was so highly valued by Jews. When during the Middle Ages certain rabbinic authorities—threatened by the intellectual incursions of the sciences and philosophy—forbade the study of such matters, medicine was exempted because of the principle that life must be chosen, as God and the sages had decreed. In 1305, the threat of excommunication was imposed by the renowned Rabbi Solomon ben Adret (known as the Rashba) on anyone who read in a scientific or philosophic discipline before the age of twenty-six, but learning medicine was allowed. And by then the authority of Maimonides was being invoked to protect students of the sciences as well, as in a letter written to the Rashba by another prominent rabbi, Jedaiah ben Abraham Bedersi. "We cannot give up science," he wrote. "It is in the breath of our nostrils. Even if Joshua were to appear and forbid it, we would not obey him. For we have a warranty which outweighs them all, that is to say Maimonides, who recommended it and impressed it upon us. We are ready to set our goods, our children and our lives at stake for it." So not only medicine, but science in general, was vouchsafed as a valued outlet for Jewish intellectual energies.

This was not the only exemption granted to Jewish doctors. Though church synods until well after the Renaissance frequently ordered Christians not to consult Jewish physicians, many of the ecclesiastical and royal dignitaries continued to employ Jewish doctors, as did prominent families. In Spain, this situation persisted even after the Jews were expelled in 1492, including at the court of Ferdinand and Isabella. Not surprisingly, the medical entourage of late medieval and Renaissance popes more likely than not included one or more Jewish physicians.

THE JEWISH EMPHASIS ON maintaining health existed in the presence of a Christian abnegation of concerns with the body. The ascetic tradition, strong since the earliest days of the Church, meant that the truly religious must not only avoid the vanity of pursuing what is corporeal, but must also accept that disease is the work of the devil or a judgment from God, to be treated, if at all, by confession and prayer. In the twelfth century, Bernard of Clairvaux—who seems to have gloried in being plagued throughout his life by chronic anemia and stomach problems—declared that monks who took medicines were in violation of Church precepts. In 1135, the Council of Rheims forbade monks and clergy from practicing medicine as contrary to theological principles. Restrictions became even greater with succeeding councils, effectively shutting the profession off from participation by some of the most educated men of the

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time. More than one Church assembly threatened to excommunicate physicians who instituted treatment before requesting ecclesiastical consultation. Unlike the attitude of Jews, religious dogma pervaded Christian theories of sickness.

Christians fundamentally saw their existence on earth as mere preparation for the next world, regarding the body as no more than a container for the soul. But Jews have lived robustly for the time on earth, for the here and now, preserving health and this life as the way to understand God. The notion of a world to come is certainly present in Judaism, but its place in Judaism was not like its place in Christianity. Though believing in the eventual coming of the messiah, Jews have always preferred to deal in a practical way with whatever is before them. This practicality is a matter of principle. This Jewish realism is a powerful factor in the Jewish determination to remain healthy and stave off death. Though the medieval Muslims called both Jews and Christians "the people of the book," Jews are in effect the people of the body as well.

III.

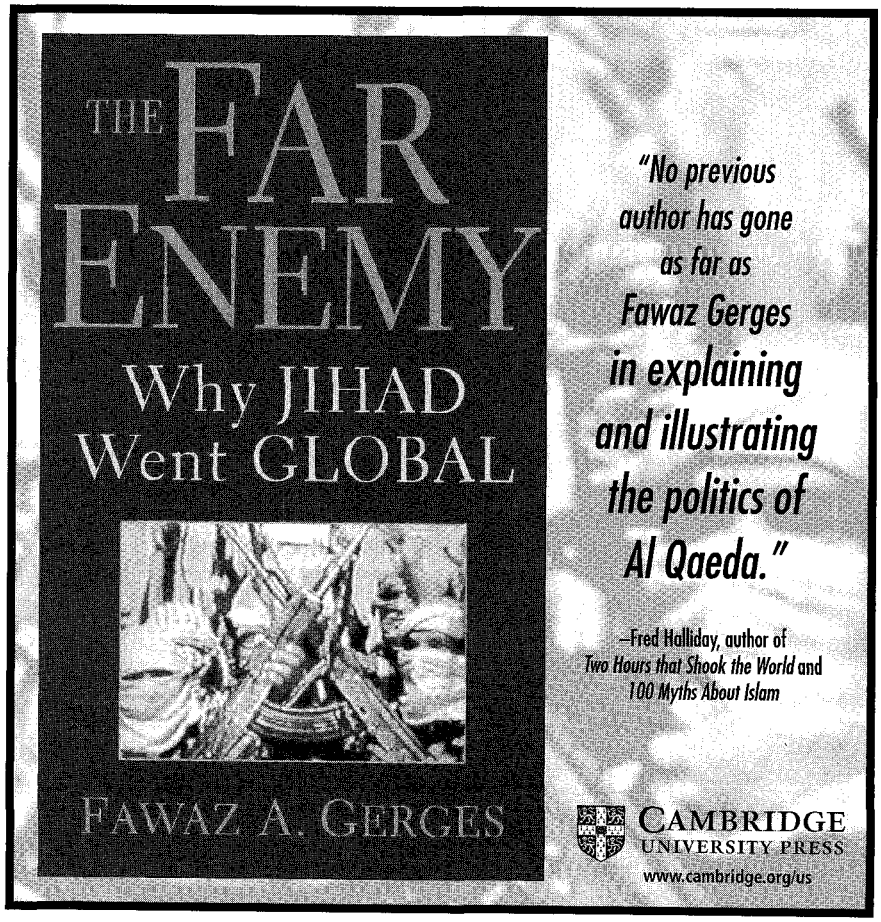
It was Jewish realism that resulted in the building of institutions for the Jewish sick, as early as the Middle Ages but increasingly around the time of the Enlightenment. Living in ghettos or confined by social pressure to specific areas of cities, their doctors usually restricted in their ability to treat in the hospitals that were beginning to appear in large numbers during the eighteenth century or to study in universities, Jews founded their own social service organizations under the leadership of community councils—among whose officers physicians figured prominently—that supported hospitals and sick-care societies, as well as other functions. Young Jewish men determined to learn the principles of the newly emerging scientific medicine were thus given the opportunity to work in the kinds of facilities that might not otherwise have been available to them or to their patients. And the ancient Jewish proclivity to seek care assured a large pool of patients. In these ways, restrictions that might have hindered professional development were countered by societal responses.

Jews, like everyone else, began to aspire to the middle class once that became possible. Just as the profession of medicine had brought entry into the courts of medieval monarchs and popes, it could make a Jew a member of the bourgeoisie after the Enlightenment. In the wake of the *Haskalah*—the Jewish Enlightenment, when so many left the intellectual confines of religious study to seek secular knowledge and acceptance—medicine was the ideal means to accomplish such an objective, especially since the civil service, that other traditional stepping-stone to the middle class, was almost entirely closed to Jews.

Though particularly characteristic of the German community, the founding of Jewish health care institutions was a process that came into being in various forms throughout Europe. And so was the increasing attempt to burst out of the constricting confines of a totally religious perspective. As the universities became more accessible, the Jewish emphasis on education began to be increasingly secularized, as a consequence of the *Haskalah*, and drew young Jews into classrooms and lecture halls as though to a magnet of worldly intellectualism. Jews became over-represented at every grade, from primary school upward. Consider one example: although they made up only 9 percent of the population of Vienna in 1912, Jews accounted for 47 percent of *Gymnasium* students. The situation was almost as remarkable at higher levels: 25 percent of the students enrolled at the University of Vienna in 1904 were Jewish. Many of these were studying medicine.

For more than a generation, Jewish families had been pouring into the great capital city of Vienna from all parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, drawn by the relative liberalism of Emperor Franz Josef, and not deterred by political expressions of anti-Semitism that were everywhere rampant. As they freed themselves from the confining religious environment of the small cities and villages in which they had been brought up, parents did what they could to secure for their children the advantages of the surrounding society. In no area was this phenomenon more pronounced than in the study of medicine.

The situation alarmed some of the most prominent figures in German academic medicine. Theodor Billroth, the leading surgical professor at the university's General Hospital of Vienna in the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late nineteenth century, railed against the presence of such large numbers of newly arrived Jewish immigrants in his classes. He described his view of the problem in *The Medical Sciences in the German Universities*, a book destined to become a classic of educational philosophy throughout the world.

> No profession, except perhaps, the clergy, is so often exploited by uneducated families who aim to climb into the cultured classes on the shoulders of the younger generation, as is the medical profession. For the Jews, a medical career offers comparatively fewer difficulties than any other, and if a doctor once achieves moderate success, countless others will attempt to duplicate it....
>
> A Jewish merchant in Galicia or Hungary (the Hungarian Jews have the worst reputation among the Viennese students themselves), earning just enough to keep himself and his family from starving, has a moderately gifted son. The vanity of the mother demands a scholar, a Talmudist, in the family.... He comes to Vienna with his clothes and nothing else. What impressions, what stimuli can such a boy have received? He has been surrounded all his life by the pettiest and most miserable circumstances, nor will he ever be able to rid himself of this narrowest of horizons. Now he comes to the university.... [O]ur teaching methods were not intended for such students, or for such conditions, for those methods demand a free mind and free intellectual movement. Such people are in no way fitted for a scientific career.

And this was written by a man of broad liberal outlook, generally conceded to have been among the most tolerant of the German-speaking professors of the day.

Among the reasons his words had wide appeal was that they did, in fact, reflect certain truths about Jewish medical aspirations in a Christian society, some of which have never disappeared—nor would any Jew want them to. But, almost certainly unappreciated by all but a few of Billroth's readers, they also reflected some of the conditions under which Jews in every era and land have striven toward careers in medicine, not only for the immediate reasons given by Billroth, but for those far more sweeping and all-inclusive historical reasons.

IV.

THOUGH THE ASSOCIATION OF Jews with medicine that consolidated during the early Middle Ages was based on religious precepts and cultural ambience, the centuries have interlarded another factor, as universal as it is personal. By this I mean a characteristic that can only be called the Jewish personality. In this era of extreme sensitivity to such notions as ethnic and national characteristics, some might think it preferable to use more euphemistic terms such as "worldview," "philosophical outlook," and "cultural orientation," but they all amount to the same thing. The Jewish attitude toward life and the world has certain qualities that have been remarked upon for centuries, by observers both friendly and hostile; stereotypes, of whatever group, do sometimes persist because they support personal impressions. Though some such impressions are only what the beholder wants to see, some of them are true observations, in the sense of having validity to objective minds. Among those that have been made about Jews, several would seem to bear on the questions posed at the outset of this essay, which can be summarized by asking, "What is it about Jews and medicine?"

Among Jews, especially those of an intellectual bent, there is commonly a kind of restlessness, an anticipation of uncertainty, ambiguity, imperfection, and the sense that one must do something about it even though the total solution will never be found. Many have lived in relative comfort with a chronic sense of discomfort. Irritability and a persistent low-grade aggravation are in the very marrow of such people. Though these qualities rankle, they may be the source of an active response to the world, whether productive or counterproductive. As Thorstein Veblen famously put it in his essay "The Intellectual Pre-eminence of Jews in Modern Europe" in 1919, "They are neither a complaisant nor a contented lot, these aliens of the uneasy feet."

Out of this restless dissatisfaction there arises a skepticism, a questioning of oneself, of one's place in the predominantly Christian world and, indeed, of the givens of that world, both great and small. Many Jews have felt themselves less bound by the encompassing assumptions of the surrounding culture, in part because they could never wholly be a part of it. "The first requisite for constructive work in modern science, and indeed for any work of inquiry that shall bring enduring results, is a skeptical frame of mind," Veblen correctly pointed out. And what is the practice of medicine, and what is the science upon which it is based, but exercises in applied skepticism, a dissatisfaction with the direction in which things are going, and a determination to do something about it, even though the doing may of necessity remain incomplete?

So ancient is the restlessness to get underway with this enterprise that it was already being articulated in the first century C. E. in a famous adage of Rabbi Tarfon: "It is not your duty to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it." All the discontinuities and differences notwithstanding, modern Jews often approach their work in the same way as the Talmudists who preceded them by a millennium and a half: by focusing on details, by applying a questioning eye to the most minute annoyances and inconsistencies in their lives and in their fields of vision. They ruminate and lucubrate on such seemingly small things, and never stop turning them over in their minds. The very closeness of their grievances with the presumed order demands a closeness of scrutiny.

DOES ANY OF THIS SOUND familiar? It should, because it is the way of the scientist and the way of the physician. From the specific to the general, proclaim the advocates of the inductive reasoning that has been the boon of science; use the general principles to explain the tiniest details of observations and disorders, say the advocates of the deductive reasoning that is the key to diagnostic and therapeutic medicine. When the Nazis hatefully called psychoanalytic theory "Jewish science," they were also expressing, far better than they knew, the debt that Sigmund Freud owed to the meticulous cogitations of his rigorous and empirically minded forebears. Though psychoanalysis is hardly a science, it derived its scrutinizing methodology from Freud's training in the laboratory, as he sought to interpret minutely the laws of nature as they applied to neurophysiology. And I would submit that it derived a part of its distinctive viewpoint from its author's absorption of the ancient rabbinic tradition—knowingly and unknowingly transmitted by his own Talmudically steeped father—of painstakingly interpreting the laws of

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Peace in the Holy Land

Does Israel's "intransigence" stand in its way?

Many hope and believe that at long last peace in the Holy Land may be at hand. And that if it were not for Israel's intransigence, for its unwillingness to make "concessions," peace could have been attained long ago.

What are the facts?

Endlessly repeated myths. The myth that Israel's "occupation of Arab lands" is the root cause of the conflict is just that – a myth! Arabs have been slaughtering Jews long before the "occupation," long before the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. In 1929, for instance, Arabs killed 133 Jews and wounded 399 in Hebron. Those who were not killed fled, making the city, where Jews had lived for centuries, judenrein. The Mufti of Jerusalem met in 1941 with Adolf Hitler and declared his kinship with Nazi Germany because "we have the same enemy as Germany, namely the Jews."

> "Arabs...are the cause for this unending war. Unless and until that mindset changes, things will not improve."

Palestine, which incorporated what is now the Kingdom of Jordan, had been part of the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire for centuries. After World War I, Britain was given the Mandate over Palestine, which, in accordance with the Balfour Declaration, was to be the homeland for the Jewish people. This was formalized by the League of Nations and by the 52 nations that comprised it. In 1922, in violation of its Mandate, the British severed all the lands east of the Jordan River – 80 per cent of the Mandate – and gave it to the Arabs who, under the Hashemite rulers, created the Kingdom of Jordan. The Jews acquiesced to this betrayal. Britain finally relinquished its Mandate in 1947 and turned its responsibility over to the United Nations. They came up with a partition plan, by which the Arab sector was to be a contiguous land mass and the Jewish sector three discontiguous pieces. Jerusalem, located in the very center of the Arab sector, was to be "internationalized." Most of the Jewish sector was the desolate Negev desert. The Jews accepted this plan. But the Arabs rejected it out of hand and invaded the nascent Jewish state with the armies of six nations. It cost thousands of lives and caused over 650,000 Arabs to flee. Had the Arabs compromised, they would now have had their state since 1948.

Unending Arab aggression. In the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel again defeated the combined Arab might and remained in possession and administration of the Golan Heights, of Gaza, of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"), of the Gaza Strip and of the entire city of Jerusalem. Israel had no intention of staying in possession of these territories. It waited for the Arabs to make proposals for peace, but that was not forthcoming. On the contrary, the Arab League met at Khartoum and promulgated their "three no's": no peace with Israel, no negotiation with Israel, and no recognition of Israel.

On Yom Kippur of 1973, Egypt and Syria once again attacked Israel. And again, the heroic people of Israel defeated the combined Arab armies and drove across the Suez Canal and to within miles of Cairo. In the aftermath of that war, Egypt's president Anwar Sadat came to Jerusalem and spoke to the Knesset, Israel's parliament. He offered a peace treaty, but imposed very tough conditions, among others, the return of the entire Sinai, with the cities that Israel had built; the return of the oil fields that Israel had developed (and which would have made it energy-independent for the foreseeable future); and relinquishing the strategic mountain passes and early warning systems that protected Israel against any future attack. It was the first time in recorded history that the vanquished imposed conditions on the victor. In what was obviously a major act of folly, and once again in its incessant quest for peace, Israel agreed to recognize the murderous PLO, invited it back into Palestine from its exile in Tunis and signed the Oslo Accord, by which governmental authority was to be bestowed on the Palestinians. But instead of accepting the outstretched hand of peace, the Palestinians launched their "intifadas," which have cost thousands of lives and which have left the Palestinians impoverished and with their economy in shambles.

The above is a mere outline of the "peace process." In 2000, under the stewardship of President Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak made unprecedented concessions for the sake of peace: 98 per cent of the land that the Palestinians requested, control over most areas of eastern Jerusalem, and authority over the Temple Mount. To the dismay of Clinton, Arafat curtly rejected this dramatic offer, under the pretext that Israel would not accept the "return of the refugees." That would have spelled the end of Israel as a Jewish state.

Israel's "intransigence?" No way! At every turn in this almost 100-year strife, Israel has offered compromises and concessions. The current folly, withdrawing from Gaza, is the latest example of that. Arabs, whose almost exclusive concern is the destruction of Israel, are the cause for this ongoing bloodletting and this unending war. Unless and until that mindset changes, things will not improve. But such a change of mindset does not appear on the horizon.

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God as they apply to daily living. As much as Jews are the people of the book and the people of the body, they are the people of transmitted memory.

And now it is necessary to return to the words of the *Geheimrat*, Billroth. Many jokes are made about the Jewish mother who boasts about "my son, the doctor." But viewed in the perspective of millennia of history, of a tradition ultimately based on the search for knowledge of God, of a society that has valued learning almost as much as it values life—and, indeed, perceives learning as the high road to life and therefore to God—is it any wonder that such a society would hold the practice of healing to be the greatest good, and therefore to hold those who practice it in greatest esteem? Only the scholar has stood higher than the *rofe* in the calculus of Jewish honor, and in early times the two were frequently embodied in the same person. Several centuries ago, the religious intellectualism of the rabbi began to be replaced by the secular intellectualism of the doctor, and that process has grown. The *rav* has become the *docere*. ■

Ronald Steel
Birth of a Salesman

THE WORLD IS FLAT:
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY
By Thomas L. Friedman
(Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 488 pp., $27.50)

SIXTEEN YEARS AGO, THOMAS L. Friedman, then a young reporter in Lebanon and Israel for the *New York Times*, published a book called *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, brimming with sharp observation and telling anecdotes, enriched by his studies of Islam and the Arabic language, and by his own Jewish heritage. His reporting from the Middle East won him two Pulitzer Prizes, and as his career advanced he was to pick up yet another. After ten years in the Middle East, he came to Washington in 1988 to become the *Times*' diplomatic correspondent. There he covered the State Department, which meant, as he writes, spending much of his time in an airplane following the secretary of state around the world. The powers that be at the *Times* liked his work, and early in 1994 rewarded him with the coveted position of foreign affairs columnist.

To land one of the prime jobs in American journalism was justly read as a powerful endorsement of Friedman's record as a reporter. It was also a vote of confidence in his ability to do more than report the news. The columnist's job is to get behind the news, to understand the personalities and the forces that make it, to see events in a perspective wider than the day's events. It means being not only the eyes of the inquiring reader, but also his critical brain. Friedman's editors bet that he could be that.

Unlike some of his predecessors and competitors, Friedman's distinguished perch has not made him pontifical. His column is breezy and conversational. In light-handed prose he reports what he sees with his own eyes and what he learns from the many "friends"—Friedman's term for what other journalists call "contacts" or "sources"—that he encounters in his endless trips around the planet. To further enliven an already cuddly style, he shares with his readers occasional heartwarming references to his lovely wife Ann and their adorable daughters, Orly and Natalie. He makes corny jokes. A friendly fellow, Friedman eagerly seeks to be casual, not formal; to be welcome, not just respected; to be comfortably sensible, not awesomely brilliant: a regular guy on the road. He wants very much to be liked.

As befits one bearing the august title of "foreign affairs columnist," Friedman realized that he must branch out from the Middle East. But where to go? Europe? Asia? Africa? Latin America? His job was to cover the globe. What better way to do this than by writing about the globe? Or by writing about something that was not actually a place, but rather a phenomenon, or at least a concept? And a concept that demanded that attention be paid; a concept capable—or so he believed—of seizing men's hearts and moving mountains, like the early dreams of exploration, or of Zionism. A concept that could be felt everywhere, but confined nowhere. A concept that offered, to the industrious and the lucky, nothing less than salvation—and to the unlucky and the recalcitrant, nothing less than damnation. A concept that meant, in his characteristically breathless words, the "spread of free market capitalism to virtually every country in the world." A concept that also meant, as he proudly tells us, the "spread ... of Americanization."

And so the globetrotter became a globalizer. Friedman let loose an ongoing stream of columns explaining why globalization "has replaced the Cold War as the defining international system." These columns led, in 1999, to an extremely long and excitable book, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. With the cozy enthusiasm that is his hallmark, Friedman offered a reassuring assessment of the bounties of this newly discovered system. These he had glimpsed not only at the beehive of Silicon Valley, where brilliant engineers discovered new realms of synergy, but also at the Swiss mountaintop retreat of Davos, where dazzlingly innovative CEOs explained the future to dazed politicians and journalists who had been invited to behold their world-transforming wisdom. Cleverly Friedman juxtaposed the wisdom that he imbibed from these captains of industry with verbal snapshots of the noble seamstresses and earnest accountants that he spotted on his tireless peregrinations through the Third World. From these he reassuringly described—in this book and in his columns—a brighter world of progress and plenty that lay somewhere down the yellow brick road.

Then the attacks of September 11 temporarily shook him from this reverie, and for the nineteen months that followed, until the spring of 2003, he focused mostly on topics related to terrorism and the Middle East. In due course he assembled those columns in book form under the anodyne title *Longitudes and Attitudes*. Essentially an assemblage of snapshots, supplemented by impressions that he called a "diary," this collection was a reporter's notebook, with all the freshness of that genre and many of its weaknesses. Like its two predecessors, this book was easy, and even entertaining, to read. It offered quick but not always persuasive answers to tough problems, and featured a colorful cast of characters:

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mullahs, entrepreneurs, taxi drivers, old chums, even a monarch or two.

Friedman, we learn, has an astonishing number of impressive friends at home and abroad. In his books we meet such interesting ones as his "friend Nick Burns, the US ambassador to NATO," and his "friend Thomas R. Pickering, the former US ambassador to Moscow and now a top international relations executive with Boeing." Even Bill Clinton, we are told for no apparent reason, tracked him down by phone at the Jidda Sheraton to give him a hot story tip.

And not only is Friedman connected, he is also, from his frequent television appearances, recognizably famous. People, he tells us, are always buttonholing him in public places, introducing themselves, and telling him what important work he is doing. Like the "young Arabs and Muslims—men and women—who have come up to me on the streets of Cairo or in the Arabian Gulf since 9/11, and said... 'Keep writing what you're writing.'" Or the "young Arab man in a well-tailored business suit" in the Amman airport who exclaimed, "'I'm reading your book right now—*From Beirut to Jerusalem*.' He had it in his hand."

But if Friedman is a familiar figure in sky lounges and bazaars, he is also a denizen of boardrooms and corporate golf courses. This has made him the media's most prominent and most enthusiastic guru of globalization. In this role he attracts those readers who cannot tell an imam from an incense-burner, but can spot an open-source interface from miles away. These two interests make for an interesting, and curious, combination. Not many CEOs are interested in Islamic fundamentalism and the unending Arab-Israeli conflict. Nor do many jihadis and right-wing Zionist militants lie awake nights thinking about open-face outsourcing. But Friedman does. With the publication of *The World Is Flat*, he goes back into equilibrium: two head-shaking books on the Middle East mess, two head-bobbing paeans to globalization.

THIS BRAVE NEW WORLD volume picks up where he left off with *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* a few years ago. Or rather it is, for all practical purposes, more of the same—with an equally catchy and equally dubious metaphor. In nearly five hundred chatty pages, Friedman tells us again and again that we live in an interconnected world where technology and instant communications are constantly changing the rules, where the race goes to the swift and the adaptable, and where American workers had better hustle if they want to stay in the game. This unexceptionable message is combined with a plethora of interviews with pioneering CEOs, genius tech wizards, savvy hedge fund managers, and even just plain folks. Peppered among them is the now-familiar supporting cast of "friends," famous and obscure, to provide the periodically required technical expertise, human interest, or spiritual inspiration.

Admirers of *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* will no doubt find much to admire again, and also much that is familiar in this exuberant and extremely wordy book. But despite its numbing length and its plethora of detail, Friedman's book tells us very little. And what it does tell us is considerably less interesting than what it ought to be telling us. Friedman waxes on, like a boy entranced by a steam engine, about the marvels of a wired, out-sourced, in-sourced, open-sourced, supply-chained world, but aside from describing its mechanics, he really has little to say about its wider significance. And much of what he does say is either wrong or superficial.

Take the title, for a start. When Friedman says that the world is "flat," he really means that the playing field has been leveled, that brilliant people and new technologies can be found everywhere, and that the race goes to the swift and the ruthless. This discovery seems less prescient when one considers that with variations it goes back at least to the Industrial Revolution. It would be more accurate to observe that the world is indeed round, in that the circle of production, distribution, and consumption is a closed one in which no actor can escape the unintended consequences of its actions. The very metaphor of globalization implies not a flat surface trailing off into infinity, but a confined sphere in which actions taken by any single player ultimately rebound upon it. In a flat world, a state can seal itself off from others. In a globalized world, such insulation is virtually impossible—which is the subject, presumably, of this muddled book.

Friedman assures us that he is aware of the downside of globalization, but he devotes little attention to describing it. This detracts from his book's usefulness and significance. Among the obvious baleful consequences of "outsourcing," for example, is unemployment in (relatively) high-wage countries. To those regrettably redundant workers, Friedman's counsel is: "You have to constantly upgrade your skills." This may be cold comfort for those who cannot move from Buffalo to Bangalore, or who have never had the benefit of a decent educational system, or who find that they remain redundant even with their newly upgraded skills because lower-paid Asians have these skills too.

Moreover, globalization is not just about finding new sources of labor or learning new skills. It is shorthand for an inexorable process that takes many forms and has sweeping consequences far beyond the realm of supply lines and distribution. For this reason it must be viewed in all its ramifications: political, social, cultural, environmental, psychological. It is remaking not only the relation of people to their work and their environment, but also the way in which states and groups interact with one another.

One malign side effect of globalization is alienation of the sort that is currently manifesting itself in international terrorism. It cuts across cultures, knows no frontiers, shapes political consciousness, and increasingly drives international affairs. For terrorists too, who have leveled the playing field, the world has become what he calls "flat." While Friedman admits that "the flat world makes it much easier for terrorists to transmit their terror," it does not seem to occur to him that the "flat world" itself—by uprooting and destroying traditional societies and cultures through the "liberating" forces of modernization—may in

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fact help to intensify the sense of alienation, helplessness, and rage that finds an outlet in terrorism.

As a system, globalization is no more synonymous with peace than it is with conflict. For this reason, Friedman can hardly be serious when he posits his "theory" that "no two countries that are both part of a major global supply chain, like Dell's, will ever fight a war against each other as long as they are both part of the same global supply chain." Similar thoughts were expressed by serious people in 1914, just before the nations of Europe, basking in the prosperity of industrialization, free trade, and their continent-wide chain of supply, and convinced that they had entered an era of eternal progress, threw themselves into an orgy of self-destruction, revolution, and war from which they are only now, nearly a century later, fully beginning to recover. But qualms like this do not fit into Friedman's sunny picture.

FRIEDMAN IS AN INDEFATIgable assembler of information, but as an analyst he has a fatal weakness. He is an enthusiast, even a salesman, and his zeal distorts his judgment. In one part of his mind he knows that profound technological change of the kind the world is experiencing today often causes social and political cataclysms. In this book he even quotes a key passage from the *Communist Manifesto* in which Marx and Engels described how industrialization uproots even as it creates:

> The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe... It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere... All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed... The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all means of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian nations, into civilisation... It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production.... it creates a world after its own image.

These nineteenth-century social theorists celebrated the inexorable advance of capitalism and industrialization because they believed that it would erase national and religious identities—and in so doing would hasten the creation of a just society based on equality and the end of exploitation. They were right in their description, but wrong in their prediction.

Friedman acknowledges that the social and political upheavals caused by the onslaught of globalization "will take some sorting out." But surely it is of some consequence that the "sorting out" can manifest itself in war, revolution, aggressive nationalism, social violence, and terrorism—all distressing factors that he choses not to dwell on. Yet they, too, are an integral part of the story, and any analysis of globalization that neglects to take them into serious consideration is not doing justice to the subject. Friedman, too, should upgrade his skills.

Like all globalists, and like utopian Marxists, Friedman believes that markets and mechanisms of production increasingly determine how the world runs. But, in fact, if economies are becoming more interdependent, states are growing more unequal. This inequality was intensified by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war. The dominant reality of international relations today is the unparalleled power of a single state: the United States. The relentless drive to industrialize by states such as India and China is fueled by intense nationalism and a quest for power. In his excitement over the mechanics of production and distribution, Friedman fails to recognize that economics has not trumped politics. Nor is it likely to trump it.

GIVEN FRIEDMAN'S POSItion as, in his modest words, "the fifth foreign affairs columnist in the history of the *Times*," one must ask why he has written a book of simplistic economic determinism in which the politics of globalization—its effect on states—is virtually ignored. *The World Is Flat* does not offer a persuasive framework for understanding the forces that dominate the post-cold-war world. Nor is it an alternative prism, say, to Samuel Huntington's gloomy "clash of civilizations" theory, or Francis Fukuyama's utopian "end of history." It is rather an exercise in impressionism: an assemblage of dots and squiggles that, from a certain perspective, form a blurry montage. Were it a novel one might call it an "entertainment," as Graham Greene used to refer to his lighter pieces. It is, above all, a work of excitable reportage.

Since Friedman is an enterprising reporter, his books on business and technology capture the mood of a time and a place. But they do not merely capture it, they also express it, and suffer from it. They lack intellectual and historical breadth, and they fail to ask the hard questions. They are gee-whiz stories, peopled with awesomely brainy entrepreneurs producing incredibly useful things that make the world an infinitely better place. But the stories are superficial and one-dimensional. Missing are the wider ramifications of how the innovative corporations so beloved to Friedman may also uproot and traumatize our world. It is possible, after all, to write about business and technology in two dimensions or even three. Marx did it, and so did Veblen and Weber. And so did John Kenneth Galbraith, and so does William Greider today.

Friedman seems to think that in the contemporary world being a foreign policy analyst is the same as being a business reporter. But the obligation of a foreign policy analyst is to help his readers

Annunciation

In our version your father kneels beside me
on the receding checkered tiles,
waiting to receive the news.

You float before us, raiment billowing,
your long boyhood curls
blond and bright as lightning.

I am praying the usual prayer,
something about protecting you
from illness or danger.

Your words travel their diagonal trajectory
like a bullet
into my ear, through my brain, into

my bloodstream. My womb quickens.
What was only dread has
taken up residence.

I am not full of grace.
I am not blessed among women.

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see America's interaction with the world in multiple dimensions—political, cultural, military, economic, environmental, psychological—and not through a single lens. This means providing an insight into the complexities not only of money and technology, or the Middle East, but—as citizens of the world's most powerful nation—of just about everywhere. The task is a tough one, but it does not demand a genius. It requires rather a knowledgeable and thoughtful person who can help us understand what we are not getting from the headlines—someone who sees the world in its many aspects, and who is able to connect the present not only to the future but to the past. For this, readers do not need a glib enthusiast or a clever simplifier. And they certainly do not need a salesman for the Next Big Thing. What they need is a cool-headed skeptic who will stay away from airports and technology parks, and instead sit at his desk for a while and think. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

continued from page 4

EMILY WILSON RESPONDS:
Michael Schmidt offers a compelling account of the problems facing any student of the ancient Greek poets' lives. Unfortunately, the insights of the letter are not fully reflected in his book. *The First Poets* does mention competing legends. But, rather than analyzing the "story of the stories" in a sustained way (as Mary Lefkowitz has done), Schmidt produces a story of his own. His narrative is often muddled, as I suggested in my review, by a strangely literalist and authoritarian rhetoric. Schmidt knows that it is not possible to write a modern biography of mythic Orpheus or quasi-mythic Homer, but he persists in doing so.

Also, Schmidt's letter implies that contemporary academia, in classical studies and elsewhere, has failed the general reader. I quite agree that the old guides to Greek literature by Lesky and Bowra remain valuable today; "antiquity" does not, to me, imply contempt. But there is a great deal of more recent work on classical literature that is both cultured and humane, and much of it is perfectly accessible to the intelligent general reader.

VIRULENT DEBATE

U.S. CONCERNS ABOUT THE SAFETY and efficacy of antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) are not, contrary to Adam Graham-Silverman's view, part of a cynical attempt to drive generic drugs out of the market in developing countries ("Wrong Dose," July 4). If the United States seems cautious, it is with good reason. The Bush administration has insisted on FDA approval because the World Health Organization (WHO)'s prequalification system is an unreliable indicator of drug quality. The WHO is not a supranational drug regulatory agency. It does not independently certify the safety and efficacy of drugs. On its list of prequalified AIDS drugs, the WHO includes the following disclaimer: "Inclusion in the [prequalification] list does not constitute an endorsement, or warranty of the fitness, of any product for a particular purpose, including in regard of its safety and/or for efficacy in the treatment of HIV/AIDS."

Graham-Silverman fails to mention that 18 "generic" ARVs listed by the WHO were either delisted by the WHO or voluntarily withdrawn by the manufacturer last year due to a lack of proof of bioequivalency with patented AIDS drugs. One of these drugs was even termed "undesirable" by South Africa's drug regulatory agency. Yet these potentially substandard drugs, the vast majority of which are manufactured in India, continue to be promoted for use in developing countries. It is hard to imagine that a similar situation would be tolerated within developed countries.

JEAN WEICHER
Research Associate
Center for Science in Public Policy
Hudson Institute
Washington, D.C.

ADAM GRAHAM-SILVERMAN RESPONDS:
Delisting of some generics did cause confusion for programs that use them. There has been disagreement, however, about whether the delisting came as a result of problems with the drugs' bioequivalence (not their chemical makeup) or with the work of outside inspectors. Whatever the case, the delistings are as much a sign that the WHO process is working as the other way around, since it caught these errors. (The WHO process inspects drug-manufacturing sites and evaluates drug quality, safety, and efficacy, or it relies on qualified local bodies to perform those tasks.) And most of the delisted drugs are back on the WHO's approved list.

More important, many African countries accept the WHO standard as the consensus method of certification. As *The Boston Globe* has detailed, four countries are rejecting drugs that have FDA approval but not WHO certification. Ironically, these countries are questioning the U.S. assumption that FDA approval should be good enough for them. To rectify the situation, the FDA has agreed to provide data to the WHO so that the latter can approve the drugs, too. While this is a nice gesture of cooperation, the United States passed up an earlier chance to work with the WHO to strengthen its process, choosing this go-it-alone approach instead. And, since the Africans have not accepted the FDA process, it remains a superfluous step. After the FDA approved only one generic for purchase and use outside the United States in the first year of its fast-track AIDS drug approval process, it has approved nine in the last few months. Let us hope that American, African, and WHO officials can continue to work together to cut the red tape that is holding up delivery of these drugs. ■

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Remastered

"SINCE THE DAWN OF ROCK, there have been individuals, usually young men, of argumentative tendencies who have lorded their encyclopedic musical knowledge over others." So states the introduction of the recent *Rock Snob's Dictionary*, compiled by David Kamp and Steven Daly. I like to believe I'm not the insufferable dweeb suggested by this definition. Certainly, much of the dictionary's obscure trivia (former Television bassist Richard Hell is now a novelist; Norwegian death metal stars actually murder one another) is news to me. But I do place an unusual, perhaps irrational, value on rock music. I take considerable pride in my huge collection and carefully refined taste. And I consider bad rock taste—or, worse, no rock taste at all—clear evidence of a fallow soul. I am, in other words, a certified Rock Snob. But I fear that Rock Snobs are in grave danger. We are being ruined by the iPod.

WHILE THE TERM "ROCK SNOB" HAS A pejorative ring, the label also implies real social advantages. The Rock Snob presides as a musical wise man to whom friends and relatives turn for opinions and recommendations; he can judiciously distribute access to various rare and exotic prizes in his collection. "Oh my *God*, where did you find *this*?" are a Rock Snob's favorite words to hear. His highest calling is the creation of lovingly compiled mix CDs designed to dazzle their recipients with a blend of erudition, obscurity, and pure melodic dolomite. Recently, I unearthed a little-known cover of the gentle Gram Parsons country classic "Hickory Wind," bellowed out by Bob Mould and Vic Chestnutt, which moved two different friends to tears. It was Rock Snob bliss.

IN SOME WAYS, THEN, THE IPOD REVOlution is a Rock Snob's dream. Now, nearly all rock music is easily and almost instantly attainable, either via our friends' computers or through online file-sharing networks. "Music swapping" on a mass scale allows my music collection to grow larger and faster than I'd ever imagined. And I can now summon any rare track from the online ether.

BUT THERE'S A DARK SIDE TO THE IPOD era. Snobbery subsists on exclusivity. And the ownership of a huge and eclectic music collection has become ordinary. Thanks to the iPod, and digital music generally, anyone can milk various friends, acquaintances, and the Internet to quickly build a glorious 10,000-song collection. Adding insult to injury, this process often comes directly at the Rock Snob's expense. We are suddenly plagued by musical parasites. For instance, a friend of middling taste recently leeched 700 songs from my computer. He offered his own library in return, but it wasn't much. Never mind my vague sense that he should pay me some money. In Rock Snob terms, I was a Boston Brahmin and he was a Beverly Hillbilly—one who certainly hadn't *earned* that highly obscure album of AC/DC songs performed as tender acoustic ballads but was sure to go bragging to all his friends about it. Even worse was the girlfriend to whom I gave an iPod. She promptly plugged it into my computer and was soon holding in her hand a duplicate version of my 5,000-song library—a library that had taken some 20 years, thousands of dollars, and about as many hours to accumulate. She'd downloaded it all within five minutes. And, a few months later, she was gone, taking my intimate musical DNA with her.

I'M NOT ALONE IN THESE FRUSTRAtions. "Even for a recovering Rock Snob, such as myself," Steven Daly told me, "it's a little disturbing to hear a civilian music fan boast that he has the complete set of Trojan reggae box-sets on his iPod sitting alongside 9,000 other tracks that he probably neither needs nor deserves." It's true: Even if music leeches don't fully appreciate, or even listen to, some of the gems they so effortlessly acquire, we resent them anyway. One friend even confessed to me in an e-mail that "I have been known to strip the iTunes song information off mix CDs just to keep the Knowledge secret."

BUT RESISTANCE IS FUTILE. EVEN THE Rock Snob's habitat, the record shop, is under siege. Say farewell to places like Championship Vinyl, the archetypal record store featured in Nick Hornby's *High Fidelity*. "The shop smells of stale smoke, damp, and plastic dust-covers, and it's narrow and dingy and overcrowded, partly because that's what I wanted—this is what record shops should look like," explains Hornby's proprietor, Rob. Like great used bookstores, the Championship Vinyls of the world are destinations where the browsing and people-watching is half the fun. (A certain kind of young man will forever cling to the fantasy of meeting his soul mate as they simultaneously reach for the same early-era Superchunk disc.) Equally gratifying is the hunt for elusive albums in a store's musty bins, a quest that demands time, persistence, and cunning, and whose serendipitous payoffs are nearly as rewarding as the music itself. Speaking of book-collecting, the philosopher Walter Benjamin spoke of "the thrill of acquisition." But, when everything's instantly available online, the thrill is gone.

BENJAMIN ALSO SAVORED THE PHYSICAL element of building a collection—gazing at his trophies, reminiscing about where he acquired them, unfurling memories from his ownership. "The most profound enchantment for the collector is the locking of individual items within a magic circle in which they are fixed," he said. But there's nothing magic about a formless digital file. I even find myself nostalgic for the tape-trading culture of Grateful Dead fans—generally scorned in the Rock Snob world—who used to drive for hours in their VW vans to swap bootleg concert tapes. My older brother still has a set of bootleg tapes he copied from a friend some 20 years ago during a California bike trip. Having survived global travels from Thailand to Mexico, the tapes have acquired an almost totemic quality in his mind. I feel the same way about certain old CDs, whose cases have become pleasantly scuffed and weathered during travels through multiple dorm rooms and city apartments but still smile out at me from their shelves like old friends. Soon our collections will be all ones and zeroes stored deep in hard drives, instantly transferable and completely unsatisfying as possessions. And we Rock Snobs will have become as obsolete as CDs themselves.

MICHAEL CROWLEY

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Reforming Malpractice Liability

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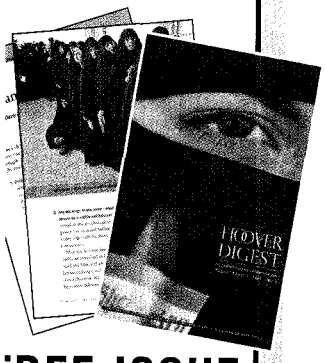

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The medical liability system is in serious trouble. Injuries due to poor medical care are the leading cause of accidental death in the United States. **According to the Institute of Medicine, between 44,000 and 98,000 deaths a year are caused by medical mistakes.** Medication errors alone account for approximately 7,000 deaths a year, exceeding the number of deaths due to workplace injuries. And when a person is injured, the system functions more like a lottery than a rational compensation scheme. According to the Harvard Medical Practice Study, only one in fifteen patients who suffer an injury because of medical negligence receives compensation; by contrast, five out of six of the cases that receive compensation show no evidence of negligence.

At the same time, the system is tremendously costly. Litigation expenses and other transaction costs account for more than half of malpractice compensation expenses. "Defensive medicine"—treatment decisions based on fear of legal liability rather than on patients' best interests—further drives up health-care costs and reduces access to care.

What should we do? Conventional tort reforms, such as reasonable caps on noneconomic damages, are a good first step. Caps reduce the malpractice pressure on doctors and hospitals and, in turn, reduce the prevalence and cost of defensive medicine—without significant or substantial consequences for quality. In a series of papers, Mark McClellan and I have documented how reforms reduce health-care costs. We analyzed the hospital expenditures and health outcomes of elderly Medicare beneficiaries with serious cardiac illness in the 1980s and 1990s. We found that patients from states with reforms such as caps had lower expenditures for their hospital care but the same rates of mortality and complications.

Conventional reforms have other beneficial effects. In an article in this June's *Journal of the American Medical Association,* David Becker, Bill Sage, and I investigate the effect of reforms on physician supply. **We find that states adopting reforms such as caps on damages showed approximately 3 percent greater growth in the supply of physicians than states without reforms.** An independent analysis published in *Health Affairs* by William Encinosa and Fred Hellinger reaches virtually the same conclusion. This expansion in supply not only improves access but also enhances competition among physicians, which helps keep costs down and quality up.

But defensive medicine is only part of the problem. For this reason, researchers and policymakers should take up three other ideas to reform the liability system.

First, patients and their health-care providers should be given more freedom to experiment with alternatives to the courts. Second, we should reform an important rule of evidence. Data on adverse medical events collected by providers to improve the quality of care should not be admissible in malpractice cases. Third, it should be easier to use clinical practice guidelines (written statements of what constitutes appropriate treatment for a specific illness, set of symptoms, or type of patient) in malpractice trials.

Stay tuned for details next week.

—Daniel P. Kessler

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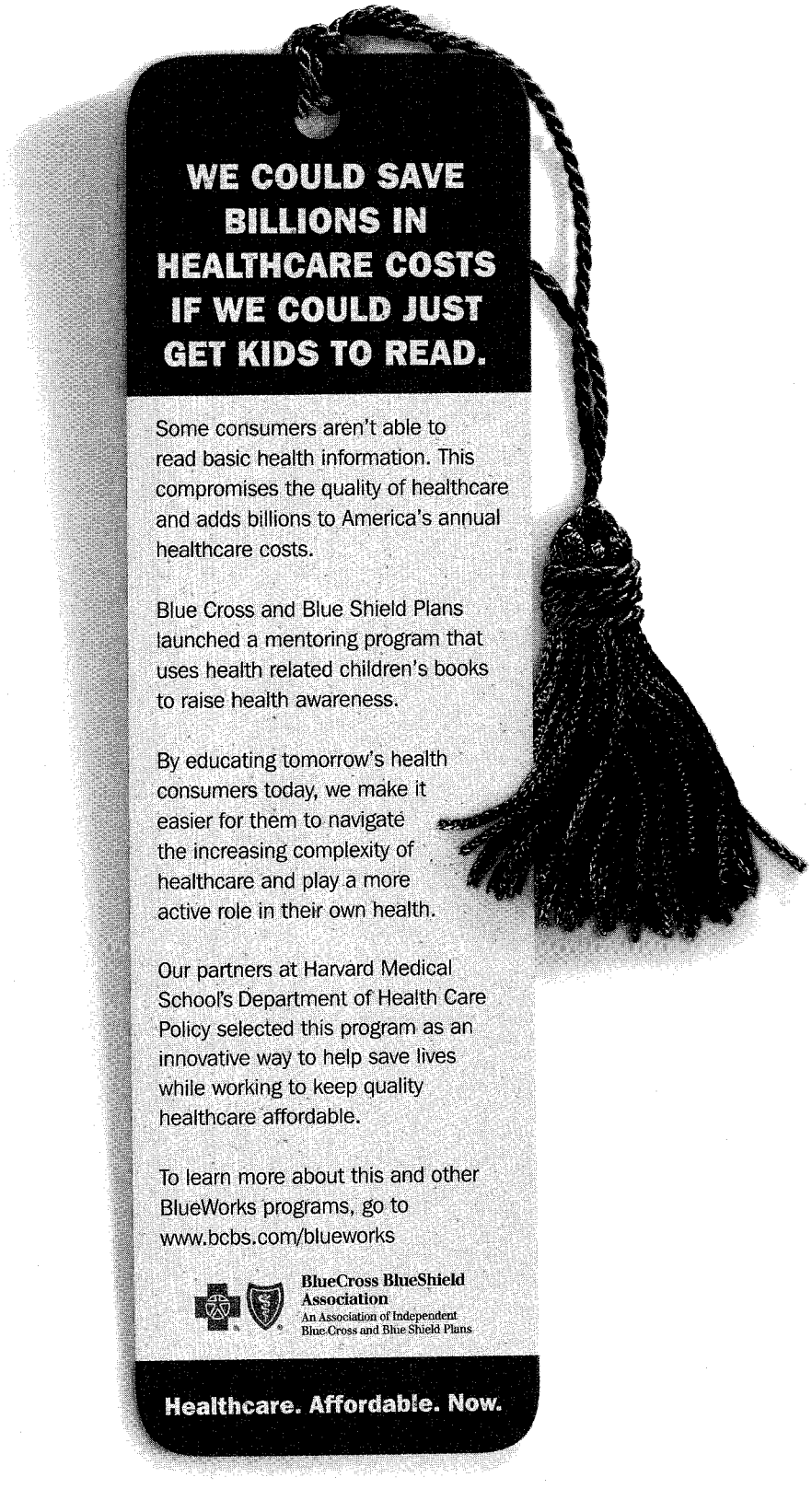
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